# PREFACE

*Through his Soul man is related to God,*
*Through his Body man is akin to animals*

Soul is another name for the principle of life in living beings. It is called Life when it stays in a material body; it is called Soul perpetually. Though a Soul is in everybody, it appears a mystery to most. It is recently that serious scientists have begun investigations on Soul. But, ancient thinkers had found many details about the Soul and had recorded them in Upanishads and other scriptures. To the extent modern researches have advanced, they have affirmed those scriptural averments.

Since retirement from the bar and the bench (Kerala High Court) in 1970, I have been studying scriptures and reports of researches on Soul. In doing so, I kept in view the advice of the Chandogya Upanishad (7:18).

*"When one ponders then alone does one understand;*
*Without pondering one does not understand:.*

I pondered on the sayings in upanishads in the light of findings of science and psychic researches. What I could thus gather about Soul I am putting down in this work in the expectation that it may help spiritual aspirants and students of philosophy. Profuse citations are given to facilitate researches in the ancient lore by aspirants.

March 1, 1993 Justice Madhavan Nair, MA, M.L.

PART ONE

# THE SOUL

## Section 1 MODERN RESEARCHES

Men in all times and in all climes have sought to know the secrets of life and death; and the work is still continued by scientists. Many early thinkers who tried to know the secrets of death, came to the conclusion that man is the union of an invisible Soul and a material body, and that death is its departure from the body. So, they declared that the functional agency, the real person, in man is the Soul in him. But, the rationalists have always been skeptical of the existence of an invisible Soul in man; and to them man is his body, and life is only an energy generated by the body for itself. Till about 1960, the medical science also held the physical body to be a complete functional unit which collected energy from food, stored energy with itself, and released energy to the organs for their works; it denied any extraneous agent, like a Soul, dwelling in the body to animate or activate it. But, the majority of mankind always followed religion; and believed in the existence of an invisible Soul in every living man, and its survival even after death of the body.

Recently, scientists who wanted to find out the real truth about Soul have started researches. Systematic researches on the existence of Soul commenced with **investigations on reality of apparitions**, which are visions of Souls of dead persons in identifiable visual form. References to apparitions are seen even in ancient books. The Indian epic, Adhyatma Ramayana (6 : 7 : 26, 27) has described how an apparition appeared and warned Hanuman about a treacherous plot to delay his urgent mission. Bible (1 Sam 28 : 14 -19) has mentioned that the apparition of King Samuel appeared to King Saul and talked with him about his imminent fall. Bible has also mentioned that, centuries after death, Moses and Elias appeared before Jesus to speak of his decease. (Luke 9 : 30, 31). But in the middle times the general disbelief of apparitions was such that mention of apparitional experiences was tacitly tabooed by most societies. It is only when great men, like Lord Brougham, Lord Chancellor of England, came forward to describe their apparitional experiences, that the taboo lost most of its force. (See The Life and Times of Henry, Lord Brougham, written by himself (1871) Vol. 1 p. 146-148). Since then, reports on apparitions, mostly of predeceased close relatives seen by persons near death, have often appeared in papers.

By about 1880, certain English philosophers and scientists became interested to make a scientific investigation of the reality of apparitions and like phenomena. They began to collect the reports of apparitions in papers. In February 1882 they formed in London the Society for Psychical Research (SPR) and started systematic investigations. Gurney and Myers, who were the prime founders and investigators of the SPR examined many percipients of apparitions, analysed their testimony, and published their inferenfces as a book 'Phantasms of the Living' (1886). In fact, Gurney observed that

an apparitional experience was caused by telephonic communication from the deceased person, supplemented by mental construction of the percipient himself; but Myers observed that the deceased person was present at the spot and caused certain peculiar effects when produced the apparitional experience in the recipients whose sensitivity of mind contributed to his vision of the apparition. A little later, Gurney himself reported two cases in which the recipient saw the apparition with beard growth subsequent to his last seeing the person alive, which the percipient did not know (See proceedings of SPR 1888-89 P. 412-415); and those cases negated mental construction by the percipient.

The proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research (Vol. 36 (1927) p. 517-524 show that, on November 16, 1905, James L. Chaffin, a farmer in North Carolina, executed a will, duly attested, devising all his properties to his third son, and thereafter, on January 16, 1919, he wrote a new will, wholly in his own handwriting, devising his properties equally to his four sons. According to the law of North Carolina a will written throughout by the testator's own hand would be valid, even if unattested. Nobody, other than the testator, knew the existence of the second will. On September 7, 1921, the testator died in an accident, and on September 24, 1921, the third son obtained probate of the first will, uncontested by anybody. About four years later, in June 1925, the testator's second son began to see dreams of his father by his bedside, and in a dream by the end of that month **he clearly heard the apparition telling him how to find the second will. Following that information he discovered the second will. The Superior Court probated it in super session of the first will.** In this case, the communication of the apparition in dream could not be a mental construction of the percipient. It showed clearly the continuance of the Soul of a deceased person.

'Deathbed visions' by Sir William Barrett, who was a physics professor in the Royal College of Science at Dublin, is also noteworthy. The opening case in that book details the circumstances that led the scientist to launch an investigation on deathbed visions. On 12th January 1924, Sir Barrett's wife, who was an obstetrical surgeon, was attending a woman who was dying after a child birth. Suddenly the woman brightened up, and asked the surgeon whether she was not seeing the woman's (late) father near her. The surgeon could not see him. Then the woman became puzzled to see her sister also with her father. In fact, the sister had died three weeks ago, but the woman was kept uninformed because of her precarious health. Soon after the above visions, the woman died. Lady Barrett rushed home, very excited, to discuss the reality of those visions, with her husband. Sir Barrett was so impressed with the woman's vision of he sister's apparition that he undertook a systematic investigation of deathbed visions of apparitions. He found that **many dying persons see apparitions of deceased relatives** come to welcome them to their after life.

Thus, investigations on appearances of apparitions have shown them to be not hallucinations, but real phenomena. They show not only existence of Souls, but also their continuance after death of the body.

1n 1885 the American Society for Psychical Research (ASPR) was formed in New York, and thereafter similar organizations arose in different cities – all for scientific researches on survival of Soul after bodily death.

By 1960, in America, sizable endowments began to come forth for researches on the survival of Soul, which indicated public enthusiasm in the matter. Many skilled

scientists began investigations in the matter in different directions. To mention only a few of them: Dr. Osis who was Director of Research at the Parapsychology Foundation, and subsequently at the ASPR, conducted a systematic survey of deathbed visions of apparitions. Dr. Ian Stevenson, Professor at the Virginia University, investigated prior-life memories in young children. Dr. Raymond Moody, who became Psychiatrist at the Virginia University, analyzed death-experience of resuscitated patients in hospitals.

## Section 2 **DR. IAN STEVENSON**

Though the theory of post-modern survival of Soul was opposed to the tenets of medical science in the pre 1970 days, Dr. Ian Stevenson ventured to investigate prior-life memories. May be he desired to examine scientifically the truth of profuse references to the Soul's survival in the Indian Vedas, the Bible, the writings of ancient Greek Philosophers like Pythagoras and Plato, and of recent German philosophers like Geothe and Schopenhauer. Elaborate enquiries that he conducted in various countries of the East and the West yielded ample fruits.

In the period after formation of the SPR, reports of present memories of prior life appeared occasionally in papers; and several of them related to **memories in young children – between the ages of two and four – about persons, places, and events, connected with their prior life. They contained verifiable details.** Well before 1960, Dr. Stevenson had begun to collect such reports from different countries all over the world. By 1977 his collection of reports of prior-life memory exceeded 1600 in number. Even as early as 1961, he had begun to visit different countries to make on-the-spot investigations. In elaborate investigations conducted on more than 300 of such reports, with the help of local doctors and professors, both at the places of the remembering children and at places of the prior personages remembered by them, **he found many details of past life mentioned by the young children to be correct;** though, in most cases the specified past personage mentioned by a child was of a different family in a distance place, whom the child had no chance of knowledge in its present life. The children who remembered their prior life, not only spoke of their name, home, relatives, occupation, mode of death, etc., in the prior life, but also demonstrated their correctness when they got an opportunity to do so. Pramod Bansauli, U.P., India, born on October 11, 1944, when he was taken for the first time, to the city of Moradabad, about 140 kilometers away, by his father, on August 15, 1949, even at the railway station hugged the legs of a person whom he had not seen before, and named him to the father as Karam Chand his elder brother, which was correct of the past personage he claimed to have been. He did also guide the cab-driver correctly through complex junctions for about a kilometer from the railway station to the home of his prior life, where he identified several persons correctly by their names. Many such instances are detailed by Dr. Stevenson in his works "Twenty Cases Suggestive of Reincarnation", and "Cases of the Reincarnation Type".

Perhaps, the occurrence of such prior-life memories in early childhood may be a feature of reincarnation without long intermission. After leaving the body, a Soul may take reincarnation forthwith, or may delay it for a time which varies with individuals. In the reincarnation of Prophet Elias as John the Baptist the interval was about eight centuries. According to the Indian philosophy, if death occurs at a time of deep concern for worldly life, the reincarnation in a womb may be almost immediate. Evidence

collected by Dr. Stevenson showed that Paramanand of Moradabad died on May 9, 1943, and was reborn as Pramode of Bisauli on October 11, 1944.

Thus, **the researches made by Dr. Ian Stevenson have brought to light much evidence to show that the Soul survives after death.** It has been further confirmed in researches on death-experiences made by Dr. Raymond Moody and several others.

## Section 3 **DEATH – EXPERIENCES**

We may hear a narration of death-experience when a dead patient revives. Doctors declare a patient to be dead when his heartbeat and respiration have ceased for a while, pupils have dilated, and his body has become cold. If, thereafter, heartbeat and respiration recur in him, he is said to have revived.

Revivals may be spontaneous or induced.

In cases of deaths by shock, suffocation, or heart failure, spontaneous revivals, though very rare, had occurred here and there even at the early times. Recently, in Kerala, a popular daily, Mathrubhoomi, dated September 4, 1986, reported that, after a nightfall, a young man who hanged himself was taken to the Government Hospital, Quilandy (near Calicut), and was declared dead. Pending autopsy, the dead body was laid on a table in the mortuary; but a little later, the night watchman who went to lock the room was surprised to find the man sitting on the table. Immediately he called the doctor. The doctor came to the mortuary and took the revived man to the ward for nursing. A few days later the man returned home. Obviously it was a spontaneous revival.

Resuscitation is induced revival. When a patient, at a hospital dies accidentally during an operation, or in hemorrhage after parturition, or by a heart failure, or when a patient who has just died of shock, suffocation, or heart failure, is brought to the hospital, the doctors try to resuscitate him to life. Resuscitation by mouth-to-mouth artificial respiration has been known a long time. In recent years the process of resuscitation has been developed remarkably. Aids to resuscitation, by way of medicines to delay brain-decay, devices to pound on the chest to shake the patient's heart, means to force oxygen-rich air, into the lungs, surgery to massage the heart, etc., have come in vogue. Since 1960, the doctors have resuscitated a good many patients in the hospitals. The patients who revived do not exhibit any infirmity traceable to the death they had overcome. **It is the experiences had by revived patients in the period from stoppage of breath to revival of breath, that are mentioned herein as death-experiences.** The fact that revived patients of different hospitals in different states, unknown to each other, narrated identical experiences after their death and before their revival, induces confidence in the truth of such experiences.

In former times also, revived persons used to tell persons nearby, the strange experiences they had at death and afterwards upto their revival. But, in those days when revivals were spontaneous and very rare, all persons who happened to hear a narration of death-experiences, from a revived person, used to redicule it as a fantastic tale of hallucinations at death. Dr. Raymond Moody, in his book 'Life After Life' tells how he too dismissed a narration of death-experiences by a resuscitated medical professor as mere hallucinations, when he was an undergraduate in philosophy at the

Virginia University in 1965. Later, when he was teaching philosophy in a university in North Carolina, in 1971 he happened to hear another narration of death-experiences of a village grandmother, from a student of his, and was surprised at its close similarity of details with the narration of the professor at Virginia which he heard in 1965. He became curious of the reality of death-experiences, and began to collect narrations of such experiences of revived patients from various hospitals. In 1972 he entered study of medicine. By 1975, when he became a medical doctor, he had a collection of 150 statements of death-experiences of revived patients of varied backgrounds; and, on the basis of events detailed in them he published his book 'Life After Life' in November 1975. Though the events discussed in that book related only to a short period of about 10 to 30 minutes between death and revival, they revealed considerable confirmation of the Soul's survival after bodily death.

**The narrations of resuscitated patients, cited in Life After Life tell clearly how at death they went out of the physical body into the atmosphere, how they glided through solid walls and ceilings of the hospitals without feeling obstruction, and how from the atmosphere they saw their dead body and the resuscitation works** done on it by doctors and nurses. They prove that the Soul is a distinct entity which dwells in the body during life, and leaves that body at death. They show also that those patients identified themselves with their Souls, when the Soul severed from the body.

Having thus known the existence of Soul as an invisible reality and an essential part of our being, we proceed to know more of its details.

Section 4 **WAT IS SOUL**

Of all creatures in the world, man alone tries to know the secrets of Nature, and that is his excellence. Though the early men were contented with the enjoyment of things as they were found in nature, even among them thinkers had been curious to know beyond appearances; and they made sharp observations, persistent researches, and deep ponderings, and thereby discovered manifold secrets not only about Nature, but also about its associate, the Spirit.

One of the things that struck the early thinkers was the **experience of dreams.** They wondered how a dreamer could experience walking in unknown places while his body lay calm on a bed, and how the dreamer could experience to meet and talk with unseen persons or to confront terrifying encounters in unheard places while he was on his bed at home. When a dreaming baby laughs hilariously it must be seeing some joyous incident; when an adult dreamer screams loudly, he must be feeling chased by something terrible. How do these happen? The dreamer experienced to talk intelligently, laugh merrily, or scream in terror; and that could often be heard by persons nearby, which showed that those experiences were not false impressions. Surely, they were not experienced by his physical senses. If so, what was it that experienced them? The more the thinkers pondered, the more **they became convinced of the presence of a mysterious internal experiencer,** distinct from the body, who remained active in the body even during sleep. As it was invisible, they thought it to be a **spirit.**

Once such an idea arose in a thinker, he began to feel the presence of that internal experiencer even in the normal routine experiences in life. Apparently the eyes catch

sight of objects, the ears catch sounds, the nose catch scents, and so forth - different organs of the body catch different sensations; but, the experience is that they are known, not by the different organs, but by a single entity in the body. That single entity knows all the sensations reaching every organ of the body. As the thinkers pondered on the identity of that entity, they felt it to be the same mysterious experiencer or spirit who experienced the dreams. Not much further pondering was needed to understand that it was the same entity that experienced pleasures and pains, joys and sorrows, affections and aversions, thoughts and desires, sleeps and dreams, etc. The thinkers inferred that, to be so active both in the wakeful state and during sleep, the entity must be a constantly alert agent. **They understood that spirit to be the real person in man, and the physical body to be only an instrument for the spirit's contacts with the material world. They named that spirit, the inner experiencer, Soul,** or **Life.** Soul and Life are one and the same. In Sanskrit and other Indian languages, it is called **Atman,** or **Jiva**. Sankhyas call it Purusha. Atman literally means self. It is the spirit in a man or other living beings.

In our actions also, whether physical or mental, the feeling is that they are done, not by the different organs, but by one entity, the self. When an object is seen, the feeling is that I see the object, and not that my eyes or may brain or my body sees it. Similarly, it is I who hear a sound, not my ears; it is I who walk, not my legs, nor my body; it is I who think, not my mind or my brain; and so on. Evidently I am the entity who experiences the sensations and does the actions; it is not my organs; or my body or mind. The entity in a human being, which is not an organ or the body or the mind, is the Soul. It is Soul that experiences sensations and causes actions; the organs are only instruments of the Soul for gathering sensations or performing actions. Chandogya Upanishad (8:12:4) says,

"He who knows that he smells this, is the Soul, the nose is (mere instrument) for smelling.
He who knows that he speaks thus, is the Soul; the organ of speech is for speaking.
He who knows that he hears this, is the Soul; the ear is for hearing."

**Soul is the 'vital principle' in man**: The early thinkers noted that a dead person did not experience a vision, or a touch, or a sound, or a pain. When they watched the happening of deaths, they noted that, often all the organs of the dying man remained alert upto the moment of death, and then, all of a sudden, all his organs simultaneously became insensible and inert like those of a doll. They could not think that all his organs, which were functioning independently of each other, had become completely damaged simultaneously. So, they inferred that the total failure of sensations in all the organs was caused by the disappearance of the Soul who experienced the sensations reaching the body, and that its departure left the body without power of sensation. They understood death to be the departure of Soul from the physical body. Without Soul, the body is only a mass of inert matter. It is the Soul that animates and activates the body. Hence, Soul is the vital principle, or 'Chaitanyam' in a man.

**Soul is a Principle of Consciousness**: The ordinary meaning of the word 'Consciousness' may be an 'awareness' of something. E.g. consciousness of right, consciousness of gratitude. It is the concrete or specific sense of the word. The word has also an abstract or general sense. The general power that enables one to see, to

hear, to speak, to understand, to enjoy etc. is also Consciousness. It is this general sense that the word is mostly used in Upanishads.

The early thinkers who pondered on the sensations of seeing, hearing, speaking, understanding, thinking, etc. felt that a sort of Consciousness worked in the organs to cause such sensations. The feeling was not one Consciousness working in the eye, another in the ear, third in the brain, etc. but of one and the same consciousness at work in all the organs. (cf. Bhagavad Gita 15:9). So it is the general consciousness, behaving like a central entity imparting consciousness to all organs. We generally call an invisible originating or activating power as a Principle. So, the entity that imparts consciousness to all organs to carry on their functions is said to be a 'Principle of Consciousness'.

The conception was that this Principle of Consciousness radiated consciousness all around it, and such radiated consciousness reached the organs through the waves of that radiation, and got crystallized diversely as consciousness of objects, facts, ideas, etc. Such as **specific consciousness (awareness) is called 'vijnanam' in Sanskrit.**

The general consciousness, which we called a Principle of Consciousness, never suffered a variation; only the radiated consciousness underwent variations. The general consciousness itself was never affected by any relation with other things. It always remained in its pristine purity. It was therefore called Pure Consciousness or **'Prajnanam' in Sanskrit**. Prajnanam literally means pure or superior consciousness. Its radiation of consciousness to the organs enabled them to function like conscious entities to grasp sensations (sight, sounds, etc.) and transmit them to the brain, and to receive impulses from the brain and translate them into actions. When the Soul leaves the body, all the organs lose their consciousness and become insensisible and inert. It is then clear that Prajnanam or Pure Consciousness is the Soul. So, the general consciousness which we called the Pure Consciousness is really the Vital Consciousness, the life. Thus, Soul is the Principle of Consciousness, or to be more precise, **Soul is the Principle of vital Consciousness, the life,** in man or other being. (ef. Life After Life p. 42).

Because the Soul constantly radiated consciousness and that consciousness manifested in the organs, the ancient sages said euphemistically that the Soul itself manifested consciousness in the organs, and caused them function. They said it in Upanishads. In Sukarahasyopanishad it is said

"That by which (one) sees, hears, smells, speaks, and knows taste and distaste, is called Prajananam" and in Aitareyopanishad (3:1) it is said
"That by which (one) sees, or hears, or smells scents, or articulates speech, or knows taste or distaste is the Soul".

These two versus together identify Soul as Prajnanam, which is the Pure Consciousness, the Principle of Vital Consciousness, in a being. It is the life or Chaitanyam in the living beings.

**The Soul is distinct from the body**: We have indicated above that life denotes the existence of Life, the Soul, in the body, and death is its departure from the body. The Soul dwells in the body constantly throughout the life. It may remain in a body for

long long years. When it departs, the body dies and begins to perish. After the death and before disintegration of the body, if the Soul re-enters the body, the body revives to life. The Old Testament says,

"And he cried unto the Lord... I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again. And the Lord heard the voice of Elijah, and the soul of the child came into him again and he revived." (1 Kings 17:21, 22)

Bhagavatham (6:16: 1-12) says that when King Chitrakethu lost his son, Narada came to condole him; and that at Narada's bidding the departed Soul re-entered the body, and the revived son consoled the king by a long advice, and then the Soul departed again from the body.

Life After Life (p. 79, 83) tells that persons resuscitated in modern hospitals also stated that they revived when their Souls re-entered the (dead) body.

The Soul can enter a body, stay in the body, and can leave the body. Evidently it is an entity distinct from the body.

**SOUL IS A MATTERLESS BEING**

Soul, being a Principle of Consciousness, must certainly be matterless, devoid of matter. Swami Vivekananda observed (vide his Complete Works, vol. I, p. 396),

"The Jiva is immaterial, and therefore will remain for ever".

Jiva means life; and life is the Soul. So 'Jiva' is another name for Soul. It is 'immaterial', that is to say, it is matterless, devoid of matter. Things composed of matter may, one day or other, disintegrate into their elements and thereby perish. A matter less thing has nothing to disintegrate; so it 'will remain', as such, for ever.

Dr. Ian Stevenson's observation at p. 353, vol. 76 of the Journal of ASPR, and Dr. Raymond Moody's observation in Life After Life (p.46) both tell that a discarnate Soul can pass unimpeded through a closed, locked door. It signifies that the Soul is matter less.

Science tells that all solids, fluids, and gases are composed of matter in different densities. But the Soul does not involve matter at all. Then, in what state does it exist, what composes it? Soul is said to radiate power of Consciousness to all organs. It is also said to appear at times in identifiable form to percipients to whom it has some message to convey. How does a matter less Soul achieve such things?

In considering such or similar mysteries about matter less existence, we have to keep one thing in mind always, and that it is the **linguistic inadequacy**. There are no apt words in language to describe correctly the nature and functions of matter less existences like the soul. The ancient Greek Philosopher Plate (427-347 BC) (in The Republic, book X) has said of the inadequacy of human languages to describe the facts about Soul. That inadequacy continues even now. Dr. Raymond Moody has said it clearly in 1975 in Life After Life (p. 25-26, 87). In the absence of apt words, what one can do is only to use words available in vocabulary which convey ideas comparable to

the facts one wants to express. Hence, many words used herein below, such as power, wave, whirling, capsule, think, reflect, remember, etc. are not to be understood in their normal sense; they are only words suggestive of things not precisely expressible in language.

Scientists investigating the secrets of nature have analysed things into their component elements, elements into component atoms, and atoms into component fine particles. It is like tracing back their evolution. They found all material things to be composed of atoms. Though atoms are of different varieties, they are all composed of identical fine particles in different combinations. Every atom is composed of electrons, protons and neutrons, which are identical in all atoms, everywhere. Electron is the finest of the three. The matter in an electron is as low as $9.1/10^{23}$ of a gram. Scientists say it is not wholly a particle of matter, but has a dual nature – **partly the nature of a particle and partly the nature of waves**. There are other fine particles which have much less of matter, than the electrons. The less is the matter in a fine particle, the more is its wave nature. Photons, the particles of light (Tejus), have much less of matter than electrons. A photon is essentially a tiny capsule of electromagnetic waves. When we look further and reach things that have no matter at all, they will have only a wave nature; that is to say, they will have only waves to compose them. Soul is absolutely matter less; so, its existence is in the form of waves. It is noteworthy in this context that at p. 48 of Life After Life, Dr. Moody has quoted a revived patient who felt his disembodied existence like waves or something similar. Waves that compose a thing do not go out of the thing; they will be moving round and round, like a whirl, in the thing. So, the waves in the Soul are whirling waves. The waves in electrons, photons, and other fine particles may be waves of a form of energy. Modern science tells that energy is a form of matter. In the matterless Soul the waves cannot be waves of energy; Soul being vital consciousness its waves can only be waves of Consciousness. In short, **the Soul exists as a fine capsule of whirling waves of vital Consciousness**. Yogachudamani Upanishad (13) says

"So long as it has not attained the supreme truth, the Soul whirls in the great Chakra of twelve petals devoid of merit and demerit (unstained)".

(Dvadasaare mahachakre Punyapapa vivarjite
Thavat jivo bhramatyevam Yavat tatvam na vindati)

For meaning of Chakra, see sect 6 below.

Matter is inert. As matter in a particle increases, its speed of rotations decreases. Conversely, as matter diminishes in a particle, its speed of rotation increases. Science has found that photons rotate at a speed of 600 billion rounds per second. A billion is a million millions in the British reckoning. If a photon that contains a trace of matter rotates at that much speed, the speed of rotations in the Soul that contains no matter at all must be higher than that. Rotation at such a high speed in a particle, or the like of it, is undetectable except by its effects. We knew the speed of rotation of photons from their causing light to travel at a velocity of three lakh kilometers per second.

Vibrations generate spreading waves. If we knock a metallic utensil with a finger, a vibration arises at the spot in the vessel. Immediately we can feel waves spreading from that vibration to all parts of the utensil. Similarly, whirling waves that rotate fast,

generate other waves that spread outward in all directions. The whirling waves of Soul generate similar spreading waves. As the whirling waves of Soul are waves of Consciousness, the spreading waves that emanate from them also comprise consciousness, though of a lesser potency. It is the generation of such spreading waves that is mentioned as **radiation of consciousness** by the Soul. When these spreading waves reach organs, they impart consciousness to the organs, and that enables the organs to function like conscious entities to grasp sensations or perform actions. The will of a Soul reflects in the spreading waves emanating from it. When such waves reach and mix with the whirling waves of another Soul, they cause effects in the latter. To reach another Soul, the Soul that generates the spreading waves may channel them towards the other Soul, much as a microwave transmitter channels its transmission to a particular station, or as the light of a searchlight focuses its rays to an aeroplane in the sky. In this regard, what the transmitter or searchlight does through a device, the Soul may easily do by itself.

When a discarnate Soul wishes to convey some message to living person, it arrives before that person (as in the case mentioned at p. 3 & 4 above). We will call that discarnate Soul as apparition, and the living person as percipient. The apparition first conveys its identity to the percipient. For that, it thinks, that is to say, **it becomes conscious of its past personality which the percipient knows well.** That consciousness of the apparition reflects in its spreading waves. When the apparition directs those waves towards the percipient, they reach the percipient's Soul and impart to it the consciousness of the past personality of the apparition. Then the percipient becomes conscious or aware of the apparition before him. He experiences that awareness as a vision of the apparition in its past personality, because of his inveterate habit of acquiring consciousness of another's presence before him by his sight. Because of that habit, he feels his sudden consciousness of the apparition's personality as a vision of the apparition; though it is really only a transmission of consciousness of the apparition to the percipient.

Similarly, when the apparition remembers, that is to say, becomes conscious of the message it has to convey to the percipient, that consciousness reflects in the spreading waves arising from the apparition. When those spreading waves reach the Soul of the percipient, he becomes conscious or aware of the message. Though it is only a transmission of consciousness by the apparition to the percipient, because of the percipient's inveterate habit of receiving messages from another person near him through a hearing of his talk, the percipient feels the instant surprising awareness of the message also as been heard by him from the apparition. (cf. Dr. Moody's observations in Life After Life p. 51, 52.)

These instances indicate the way a Soul carries out functions by manipulation of its waves. Through spreading waves it radiates consciousness to the organs, and gives a vision and a message to a percipient, and does other functions.

## Section 5 THE PERSON IN A MAN

We observed that all sensations that are grasped by the different sensory organs are experienced to be received, cognized, and enjoyed or suffered by one entity, the Soul, which is distinct from the organs, distinct from the body itself. Scientists say that each sensory organ has a particular centre in the cortex of the brain to which it transmits its

sensations for cognition, and that those centres are separate from one another. If it is the brain that cognizes sensations, the different sensations – sight, touch, hearing, taste, smell, pleasure, pain, etc. – arriving at different cortical centres, must be experienced as being cognized by those different centres. But, the experience is unmistakably that they are cognized by one entity at its own seat, which entity is distinct from the body. Bhagavad-Gita (15:9) says

"Depending on the ear, the eye, the skin, the tongue, the nose and the mind, the Soul enjoys the sensations."

It is the Soul that enjoys all the sensations that reach the body. It is the Soul that enjoys the pleasures, and suffers the pains. The body is an insentient mass of matter. The only sentient conscious thing in our system is the Soul. **Only the entity who experiences sensations would be the "person" in man. So, the person in man is the Soul in him**, and not his body.

Soul is the incorporeal vital power of Consciousness which exists as a definite being. It grasps sensations. It imparts vital power to the bodily organs to function in diverse ways. It can appear in a visual form as apparition, and transmit ideas to another Soul. (vide sect. 1 above). Soul is not a mere power; it is much more; it is an incorporeal person indeed.

Bhagavad Gita (2:22) avers that the physical body is only a covering to the Soul for the period of a life, and that when it becomes worn-out the Soul leaves it and takes on a fresh body. We call it a new life. The verse reads,

"As a man, casting off worn-out clothes, takes on other fresh clothes, so does the Soul, casting off worn-out bodies, takes on other fresh bodies." (Gita 2:22)

An actor may put on the clothes of a waiter and act as a waiter in one scene, and subsequently he may put on the dress of a king and act as a king in another scene; but he remains the same Mr. so and so throughout. Likewise the Soul may bear one body form and live as man A, and later leave it and bear another fresh body form and live as man B, but the Soul remains the same throughout. Soul takes life after life, bearing a fresh name and form for each life. We have noted above that recent researches of Dr. Ian Stevenson have confirmed the above phenomenon in a scientific way.

When a young child, like Pramode of Bisauli, 2 1/2 years old, says that he was so-and-so in the prior life, he speaks naturally of his Soul alone as his personality, and overlooks his body. (Cf. Twenty Cases Suggestive of Reincarnation (1976) by Dr. Ian Stevenson p. 109, 115). When a resuscitated patient says that before revival he saw from the atmosphere his dead body, he regards his Soul as his personality, and looks at the body as distinct from his self.

(See Life After Life p. 35-40). When Quran (3:30) says

"Every soul will find itself confronted with all that it hath done of good and all that it had done of evil" it identifies the Soul as the doer, and discards his physical body in that identification.

When the Bible says

"Tribulation and anguish upon every Soul of man that doeth evil: (Rom 2:9) it also implies that the person in man is the Soul in him.

Consciousness is that **the person in a man is his Soul,** and not his body. The identification of one's person with the body seems to betray ignorance of the Soul.

Section 6 **ABODE OF SOUL**

As the Soul remains in the body constantly throughout life, it must have a definite seat or abode in the body system. Katopanishad (2:20), Mahanarayana Upanishad (12:1) etc. say that the Soul dwells in a 'cave' in the creatures. Certain other Upanishads like Chandogya Upanishad (8:3:3) and Prasna Upanishad (3:6) say that the Soul stays in the 'heart'. The Svetasvatara Upanishad mentions the abode of Soul as the heart in verse 3:13 and as the cave in verse 3:20, indicating thereby that both denote the same location in the body. The name 'cave' connotes an empty hollow. The four-chambered organ of heart, which draws in blood and pumps it to the lungs and other parts of the body 72 times every minute, cannot be called a cave in the body. Philokalia, a celebrated book of Catholic theology, in its glossary, defines 'heart' as
"not the physical organ, but the spiritual centre of man's being"

If it is not the organ of heart, what part of our system may it be?

Yogachudamani Upanishad (13) observes,
"In the great Chakra of twelve petals… the Soul whirls round and round."

It depicts the abode of Soul as the Chakra of 12 petals. **Chakra is the technical name, in Sanskrit texts on meditation, for certain spots in the capillary hole of a fine nerve in the spinal cord**.

In the central cavity of our backbone is the spinal cord. It comprises two lobes which are bundles of fine nerve fibers that transmit impulses, to and fro, between the organs and the brain. Upanishads say that, in between the two lobes, there are a few fine nerves that do not transmit impulses, but have a hole throughout their length, through which air can pass (vide Yogasikha Upanishad 5:16-27). The most important among these fine nerves is the central nerve called **Sushumna** or Brahmanadi. The hole in it is closed at the base and opens at the top. It extends throughout the length of the backbone, from the sacral plexus to the brainstem and further upto the top of the head where it opens into a fine hole in the suture, called Brahmarandhram (vide Advayataraka Upanishad 5-6, nishad 4:10). There is no circulation of blood or regular passage of air in Sushumna. Indian sages aver that meditation at particular spots in the capillary hole of Sushumna leads to high spiritual experiences. These spots in Sushumna are called Chakras or Centres. The meditators are to conceive a lotus flower of particular number of petals at each Chakra, with an effulgent disc at its centre; so these Chakras are sometimes referred to as 'lotus flowers' in the Upanishads. The main Chakras are:

Muladharachakra of 4 red petals at the base,
Svadhistanachakra of 6 bright red petals at the level of the base of external male organ

Manipurachakra of 10 scarlet petals at the level of the navel,
Anahatachakra of 12 blue petals at the level of the heart organ,
Visudhichakra of 16 grey petals at the level of the base of neck,
Ajnachakra of 2 white petals at level with the middle of eyebrows

So, the Chakra of 12 petals is at the middle of the capillary hole of Sushumna, on level with the heart organ.

Dhynabindu Upanishad (94) locates the Soul "in the centre of a 'lotus flower' of eight petals in the region of the heart." This spot is called **heart centre** (See Meditation by Monks of the Ramakrishna Order, p. 26, 27). The name **'heart' is a short for the heart centre**. It is said to be just below the lotus flower of 12 petals. The lotus flower to be conceived in it is red in color, with an effulgent disc at the centre. (cf. Mahanirvana Tantra 5:5:132).

Whether it is the 'lotus flower' of 12 petals or of 8 petals, the location is on level with the heart organ, in the capillary hole of Sushumna in the spinal cord. As the Soul is mentioned to be smaller than an atom (anoraneeyan) and also matterless, it can comfortably remain in the capillary hole of Sushumna. As this hole is an empty quiet long hollow, the epithet 'cave' also suits it well.

**Thus, the abode of Soul, according to Upanishads, is in the middle of the fine hole in the central fine nerve Sushumna of the spinal cord.**

## Section 7 **DEPARTURE**

The departure of Soul from the body had been a subject of investigations from very early days. They go on even now in the Western countries. The findings made by early investigators are recorded in Upanishads and other scriptures. They reveal the following particulars:

1) When the time of departure approaches, **temperature rises at the top of the heart centre**.

Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (4:4:2) mentions that on approach of death the temperature rises at the top of the heart centre. "Hridayasya agram pradyotate". 'Pradyota' is defined in Apte's Sanskrit-English Dictionary as 'irradiating', which is heating with radiant energy (vide, Random House Dictionary). So 'pradyotate' means 'becomes heated'. Brahmasutras (4:2:17) also tells 'Tadokograjvalanam". 'Tad' means it – the Soul: 'oka' is home; 'agram' is topmost part; jvalanam' means blazing ordinarily, but, in the context of physical body, it must mean a rise in temperature. Putting together, the aphorism signifies that temperature rises at the top of the abode of Soul. Often we find persons nearing death asking for a little water to drink; it may be a reaction to the development of heat at their vital interior.

According to the Prasna Upanishad (3:9) the body heat is the expression of a vital air, called Udana (tejo hava Udana). Five are said to be the vital airs working in our system – Prana and Apana the air that we breathe in and breathe out, Vyana the air that causes articulation of speech, Samana the air that helps circulation of food, and Udana the air that maintains bodily heat uniform throughout the body. (See Chandogya Upanishad

1:3:3 and Prasna Upanishad 3:5,9). Prana air is obviously the ordinary atmospheric air that goes into the body. Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (1:5:3) tells that all the vital airs are Prana only, meaning thereby that it is the Prana air that divides itself into the five vital airs, for performing diverse functions in the system. Cf: Prasna Upanishad 2:3. Hence **all the vital airs are atmospheric air that moves about in the body to accomplish various purposes**. The concern of Udana is mainly the bodily heat. Whether a person is in Siberia where temperature may fall below 10ºC, or in Libya where temperature may rise above 50ºC, Udana circulating throughout the body would maintain his bodily heat steady and uniform at 37ºC. When temperature at a particular spot rises above the rest of the body, the indication is said to be that the vital air Udana has accumulated there. When temperature at the top of heart centre, rises it signifies that **Udana air collects just above the Soul in Sushumna**.

As the temperature at that spot rises, Udana also gets heated. Then, **like any other hot air, Udana rises upward**, in the capillary hole of Sushumna which goes to the top of the head.

2) **When Udana moves upward through Sushumna, it makes sound.**

Jabaladarsana Upanishad (6:36, 37) says,
"In the air that goes to the Brahmarandhram, sound arises, first like the sound of a conch, midway like the sound of clouds, and when the air reaches the middle of the crown, it is like (sound of) a mountain brook..."

The mention of three different sounds indicates passage of the air through regions of different terrains. It may be the regions after the spinal cavity, because in that long cavity Sushumna is straight and uniform and therefore the sound of Udana's passage through it must be uniform – may be like low buzz. After the spinal cavity, it is the brainstem where Sushumna is amidst thickly crowded nerve fibres. The congestion there is apt to make the sound of Udana's passage somewhat shrill. So, the Upanishad says, it sounds like the sound of a conch. After the brainstem, Sushumna passes through the brain, full of folds or ridges and deep fissures. As Udana passes through that terrain it is said to make a sound like that of clouds – not like that of a thunder burst but like that a smooth collision of clouds. Finally, when the air reaches the top end of Sushumna at the Brahmarandhram, its sound is said to be like gurgling of a mountain brook. This description of Udana's movement makes clear that the air that goes to the top end of Sushumna produces sound as it moves on. The movement of air does not make sound if it is slow. Only a speedy rush of air causes a sound. So **the mention of sound in the air going upward signifies that its movement is a speedy rush.**

**3) The air that rushes upward to the top of the head pulls the Soul after it.**

Prasna Upanishad (3:7) says (Oordhva Udana... nayati) the Udana air going upward pulls the Soul after it. Science tells us that, when air rushes through a long thin tube, it makes a near vacuum behind it, which pulls nearby things after it. When Udana air rushes upward through the long capillary hole of Sushumna it creates a near vacuum to follow it, and that pulls the Soul to follow. Hence the Upanishad says that Udana rushing upward pulls the Soul after it. (cf. Life After Life p. 30, 34).

4) **The Soul nearing the exit feels happy and conscious of the past.**

Jabaladarsana Upanishad (6:37) tells that when the air reaches the middle of the crown it makes a sound like that of a mountain brook, and that

"Then the Soul becomes truly happy and extra conscious." (preeto mahaprajna sakshad atma)

Yogakundali Upanishad (3:12) mentions the region above the sixth Chakra to be "sukhamandalam", a region of pleasantness. As the Soul crosses that region it becomes joyful, and also extra conscious. The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (4:4:2) indicates that extra consciousness as a recollection of the past. It says,

"The departing Soul.... (savijnano bhavathi) becomes possessed of extra consciousness; with such consciousness he passes on (i.e. goes out of the body); and him follows the knowledge, karma and also (purvaprajna) consciousness of the past."

We have noted (p.8 above) that consciousness ordinarily means awareness of a fact, idea or the like. The Soul itself is pure consciousness; so, to say that the Soul becomes possessed of consciousness is to mean an extra awareness in it at that time. The Upanishad soon clarifies it as "purvaprajna" the consciousness of the past – the recollection of deeds, events, and experiences, in the life just over. We will be observing later (in sect. 26 below) that all the deeds, events and experiences in life exist and continue intact as Karmabhavas in the Subtle Body that enwraps the Soul. That enables the Soul to make within a few seconds a quick review of all that happened in the life and thereby become conscious of the past. (cf. sect. 32 below), and Life After Life p. 65).

**5) Udana and Soul go out through the hole in the suture at the top of the head.**

Yogasikha Upanishad (6:33) mentions, "Crossing the six Chakras, (the Soul) goes out through the Brahmarandhram." (Shat chakrani cha nirbhidya Brahmarandhrad bahirgatham).

We noted above (p.13) that Chakras are spots in Sushumna. The expression 'crossing the six Chakras' may not be strictly correct, as the heart centre the abode of the Soul is just below the fourth Chakra, and therefore the Soul moving upward has only to cross the 4th, 5th and 6th Chakras to reach the end of Sushumna. "Crossing the six Chakras" in the context may mean reaching the Seventh Chakra which is the very end of Sushumna, the Brahmarandhram, often referred to as the Sahasrarachakra.

Aitareya Upanishad (1:3:12) mentions, "Penetrating the suture and through that hole, the Soul enters (the body)."

Paimgala Upanishad (1:3) also mentions that Souls enter all body forms in the universe by penetrating the Brahmarandhram in the crown, and then the inert body forms become animate and prone to action. It naturally follows that the Soul's exit also is through the same hole. (cf., Life After Life p. 47, 83).

**6) On the exit of Udana and Soul, the body becomes cold and inert**

As Udana that maintains bodily heat goes out, the body loses heat and becomes cold; and as the Soul, who animates the body, goes out, the body becomes inert like a log of wood. (When they reach the atmosphere, Udana merges in the air, and the Soul glides about for a time.)

**7) Even as the Soul leaves the long-cherished physical body, it holds its Subtle Body intact.**

The Brahmasutras (3:1:1) says, "The Soul going out to acquire another life, goes well enveloped."

What envelopes the Soul is its Subtle Body. The Bhagavad-Gita (15:8) clarifies that the Soul carries the Subtle Body as it leaves the physical body. (See Sect. 10 below). 'Life After Life' shows that many revived patients at American hospitals have also spoken of the existence of a Subtle Body on discarnate Souls.

Section 8 **BRAHMAN** (Godhead)

To know the nature of thing, we generally look first to its origin. Indian sages said the origin of soul is Brahman. It is the most mysterious thing in Indian philosophy; it is also the most fundamental thing in it.

Brahman should not be confused with Brahma who is one of the Trimurti of Hinduism (comparable to the Trinity of Christians). Mythologically, Brahma is a god of four heads and four hands, the revealer of the Vedas, and the husband of goddess Saraswati. Brahma is a personal God; but Brahman the source of Soul is an Infinite Incorporeal Supreme Power without limit in space or time or capability.

In tracing the origin of Soul, we have to go to the origin of the universe itself. We trace the origin of a thing 'A' to another thing 'B', the origin of 'B' to C, the origin of C to B, and so on, till we come to a thing that had no origin, but was self existent from the beginning beyond comprehension. That ultimate thing must have been the basic source of everything in the universe. Indian philosophy named it **Brahman**. 'Brih' in Sanskrit means to expand or grow. So, etymologically 'Brahman' means that which expanded or developed as the universe. In the beginning, it alone existed; there was nothing else. But, it was everywhere without limit. Chandogya Upanishad (3:12:6) avers that a part of it evolved as the universe (with all its beings). (See also Bhagavad Gita 10:42).

Brahman had no origin. It existed long before anything in the universe began to evolve, when there was no matter or energy in any form at all. Brahman then was a potential power, a power-potential. As such, it was without action or motion. Because of its obscurity some texts have even said it was "neither existent nor non-existent" (Vide Rig Veda 10:129:1, Bhagavad Gita 13:13). If it was not non-existent, it did exist, however imperceptible it might have been. Chandogya Upanishad mentions it as "Sath", which literally means "an existing thing". It says

"In the beginning there was only Sath, The One only, without a second". (Ibid 6:2:1)

Later, when Brahman rose to activity and fragments of it entered body forms created by Nature, they manifested vital consciousness (life) in them (vide p. 19 below). **It made clear that the power that was latent in Brahman was the power of vital consciousness.**

Here again, even at the risk of repetition, I may remind the reader the linguistic inadequacy mentioned at p.15 above. There are no words by which the nature of ways of Brahman may be correctly described. Katopanishad (2:23) tells plainly that Brahman cannot be explained by words. Many words used herein below to explain the nature and ways of Brahman, such as existence, power, inclination, vibration, wave, manifestation, diffusion, severance, etc., are not to be taken in their normal sense; they are only terms of approximate analogies to what are not correctly expressible in language.

Aitareyopanishad (1:1:1) and Chandogya Upanishad (6:2:3) mention the first event in Brahman to be an inclination for Creation. An inclination may arise in the vital consciousness even in a potential state, though it cannot achieve that inclination without rising to an active state. The inclination or wish that arose in Brahman excited it, and caused subtle vibrations (like pulsations) in it. It marked the commencement of Brahman becoming active for creations. The vibration in Brahman is described in Rig Veda (10:29:1-5), which has been translated by Swami Vivekananda thus (vide his Complete Works, Vol. 6, p. 178-179):

"Existence was not then, nor non-existence,
The world was not, the sky beyond was neither,
…………………………………………………
But motionless did That vibrate
Alone, with Its own glory,
Beyond That nothing did exist.
………………………………………………..
Creative then became the glory,
With self-sustaining principle below,
And Creative Energy above."

In this verse the pronoun 'That ' refers to Brahman. Brahman vibrated by its inclination. It vibrated by its own prowess which was remaining dormant hereto but now become roused by a desire for creation. As Brahman was an expanse of Vital Consciousness, uniform throughout, the excitement it felt, pervaded through-out; and the vibrations appeared everywhere in it. Rig Veda says that the vibrations were "motionless", that is to say they were stationary. They vibrated in their respective stations in Brahman. As they were throughout Brahman, it was as if infinite stationary units of vibration filled everywhere. It was as if Brahman was a cosmic assemblage of intimate units of subtle vibration. As Brahman was potential vital consciousness, these vibrations were vibrations of vital consciousness.

Normally, vibrations generate spreading waves around them. Vibrations in Brahman also caused spreading waves that spread in all directions. Because of the high potency of vital Consciousness (which was formerly latent, but now excited by a wish) the subtle vibrations and the spreading waves in Brahman easily became like vigorous. The spreading waves spread out in all directions from each unit of vibration and hit other units in the neighborhood. In the result, every unit of vibration in Brahman was hit by a number of spreading waves reaching from different directions. When a wave hits, something like a push occurs. When pushes from different directions thrust simultaneously on a unit, it begins to rotate. As the pushes continue, the rotation

quickly gains speed. When rotation gains speed, the spreading waves around it become stronger. By their acceleration and speed of rotation of the units of vibration steadily sprang up. Thus, Brahman became like a cosmic assemblage of infinite units of rapidly rotating vibrations of vital consciousness.

The vibrations, waves and rotations that arose in Brahman never ceased. The innumerable rotations in things of the universe, from huge galaxies to fine particles like photons, may be traced to the rotations that arose in Brahman. When a rapidly rotating thing undergoes some transformation, the speed of rotation may be expected to get reduced a little in the new formation. According to the Indian philosophic theory of evolution (p. 21-22 below) there were four transformations in Nature (which itself was an evolution of Brahman) before fine particles like photons evolved. It is well known to students of modern science that the photons rotate at a speed of 600 billion ($6x100^{14}$) rounds per second. The speed of original rotation in Brahman must have been for above that in photons – an unimaginably high speed indeed!

Vibrations rotating rapidly form like whirls. We may call them 'whirling waves'. Each unit of vibration in Brahman became like a whirling wave, rotating at its spot. Thus Brahman comprised infinite whirling waves of vital consciousness. Just as the electrons in an atom remain definitely separate from one another, the units of whirling waves in Brahman also remained separate from one another. As the whirling waves of Brahman rotated rapidly, Brahman became prone to activity.

When Brahman rose to activity, with innumerable units of whirling waves of vital consciousness rotating at an unimaginably high speed, some of the units began to get detached from Brahman and spin independently. It was like molecules of water separating from a boiling body of water. Mundaka Upanishad (2:1:1) mentions such diffusion of fragments to be a normal incident in Brahman. The units of whirling waves that severed from Brahman continued to rotate as before – perhaps at a slightly lesser speed. When nature began to create material body forms (page 21-22 below) and some of the severed units of whirling waves entered into such body forms, they clearly manifested vital consciousness (life) in them. **Then it became evident that the potential power which was originally in Brahman was the power of vital Consciousness**. Brahman was Vital Consciousness itself. "Prajnanam Brahman" says Aitareya Upanishad (3:3). When it became so apparent, Brahman came to be regarded as the Universal Principle of Vital Consciousness. As the fragments of Brahman that dwelt in body forms were called Souls, the omnipresent Brahman came to be called the Cosmic Soul or **Godhead**.

Vital Consciousness is a Power of immense capabilities. In individuals, it manifests generally as life, and particularly as powers of perception, comprehension, reflection, recollection, imagination, insight, thought, desire, emotion, impulse, will, firmness, vivacity, etc. Aitareya Upanishad (3:2). In its functions, it behaves like a definite entity wielding the above said powers. In the cosmic state, it manifests much larger powers. It reveals supreme power. It animates all living beings. It manifests in all phenomena in the universe and guides and controls them. (See sect. 39-42 below). The Vital Power of Consciousness that is active everywhere must naturally be conscious of everything, every happening, every need, every fulfillment, etc. that exist or happen anywhere in the universe. It is therefore omniscient. Consciousness of all details about a situation, when put to play, becomes an ability to bring about the effect desired in that

situation. So omniscience in practical application becomes omnipotence. We noted above that a discarnate Soul can appear to a living person and convey messages to him clearly and unmistakably. The reputed scientist and medical professor Dr. Ian Stevenson, who has investigated many cases of apparitions, has published the results of his investigations thus:

"....They may appear and disappear without coming and going like ordinary persons or objects; they may pass through solid walls and closed, locked doors; and they may move about by gliding instead of walking. Yet apparitions (or at least some of them) also behave in certain respects like ordinary persons and objects...Apparitions may be reflected in mirrors. Even more important is their frequent adaptive reaction to the physical situation in which they occur and to the people present; they may approach or recede from persons present and walk around physical obstructions. ... They may also gesture to draw the percipient's attention....." (Journal of ASPR, Vol. 76, p. 353).

If vital consciousness that is a Soul can do so, certainly the more powerful Consciousness that is the Cosmic Soul or Godhead can do likewise and much more, of a personal or general nature. Hence, it is said Vital Consciousness is of immense capabilities.

The appearance of vibrations and whirling waves made 'no change' in Brahman, except that what was latent arose from its latency or dormancy and became active. Brahman remained dormant hitherto, but it has now become active with rapidly rotating waves of vital consciousness of immense capabilities.

The Vedic verse cited above says that the prowess in Brahman became 'creative'. Vital Consciousness is functionally a general power which involves a number of specific powers, including creative genius, the power of ability to imagine, design and make things of art. When the wish for creation arose in Brahman, the creative genius in it sprang up and became active. As it was a specific power, and more similar to a mechanical power than to a vital one, it became distinct from the general power of vital consciousness that is Brahman. It became like an evolution from Brahman. It was particularly called Primal Nature, or Nature for short – Moolaprakriti or Prakriti in Sanskrit. Niralamba Upanishad defines it as the power of Brahman (Brahmasakti) clever at creation of manifold universe 'in the presence of Brahman' (i.e. with cooperation of Brahman). As Brahman is Vital Consciousness (life) its cooperation is unavoidable for efficient creations.

As nature was an offshoot from Brahman which comprised infinite whirling waves of Consciousness, such waves inhered in Nature also with a lesser speed of rotation. But their speed of rotation was far higher than that in photons which were sub-products of Nature. Nature existed like a cosmic assemblage of infinite whirling waves of Consciousness, rotating at a high speed. It made Nature a highly active power of creative genius. Nature and Brahman were to function in mutual cooperation – Nature to create forms, and Brahman to animate them suitably.

But, then there was no stuff for Creations. There were only Brahman and Nature; nothing else was in existence anywhere. So, to procure stuff for creation, Brahman thought of transforming part of Nature into elements. Brahman's desire for a change in Nature, which reflected in its spreading waves and hit Nature, made Nature fond of

changes. The fondness for change pervaded Nature so much that it adopted for itself changing modes of existence. Sages said that **Nature existed in three modes in the main**. The modes of nature are called 'Gunas' in Sanskrit. The three main modes of Nature are called Satvaguna (pious nature), Rajoguna (egoistic nature) and Tamoguna (dull nature). All the three modes of Nature inhere also in all beings in the universe. But, the Gunas are not stable; they change frequently in their mutual proportion. (See Bhagavad Gita 14:5-10).

When Brahman and Nature began to work together, the mode of Nature began to reflect in Brahman. When an object reflects in a mirror, the mirror remains unaffected, but it appears to contain that object. Though it is an illusion, the appearance impresses like real. In a similar way, when the Gunas or modes of Nature reflect in Brahman, the Brahman is unaffected, but the part of Brahman where the reflection occurs, appears to contain the Gunas, that is to say, to be influenced by the Gunas, and to behave like a being displaying different temperaments according to circumstances. Brahman appearing to behave thus is called **Sagunabrahman** in Sanskrit. The prefix 'sa' in a noun means 'with'; so the name Sagunabrahman means Brahman with the Gunas, that is to say, Brahman with the reflection of Gunas or modes of Nature; Brahman in whose behaviour the Gunas reflect. Though the word Guna denotes a mode of Nature, it may , by a figure of speech, denote Nature itself, in which case Sagunabrahman mean Brahman in association with Nature. **Very often in the Upanishads, the name Brahman is used instead** of Sagunabrahman, for short. Godhead, Impersonal God, Cosmic Soul, Easvara, Paramatman, etc., are synonyms for Sagunabrahman, for short. Godhead, Impersonal God, it is Sagunabrahman who sustains the universe.

Brahman wished transformation in Nature. It meant an appreciable reduction in the speed of rotation of its whirling waves. Rotations of whirling waves in vital consciousness are not mere movements of the waves around an imaginary axis in definite speeds; they signify displays of different powers of the consciousness. Vital consciousness, which comprises several specific powers, manifests those different powers by adoption of different speeds of rotation of its waves. At its highest speed, which occurs in Brahman, it manifests the supreme vital consciousness (Prajnanam) as such; at a slightly less speed, in Nature it displays creative genius; at a lesser speed, in living beings, it manifests life; at a lesser speed, in Intellect, it manifests the power of thinking and understanding; at a still lesser speed, in Mind, it manifests the power of reasoning and feeling; and so on. By alternation in the curvature of its lens, the eye catches sight of objects at different distances; by alteration in the speed of rotation of its waves, vital consciousness projects different powers in the beings.

When Brahman wished transformation in Nature, the wish reflected in its waves. When spreading waves bearing such reflections from Brahman reached the whirling waves of Nature and mingled with them, the latter became denser and their speed of rotation got reduced. The result was a part of Nature evolved as a new element called Intellect (Mahat in Sanskrit). Mahat is the Cosmic Intellect that pervades the universe. The power in intellect was consciousness of objects, material and immaterial. It could think, understand, reflect, recollect, decide, etc. Next, Brahman wished transformation in Intellect. When the spreading waves carrying reflections of the Brahman's wish, mingled with the whirling waves of Intellect, they became denser and their speed of rotation became reduced. The result was that a part of Intellect transformed as a new element called Ego (Ahamkara or Ahambuddhi in Sanskrit). It was consciousness of 'I-

and-mine' : elation with objects, that is to say, consciousness of self and self interest. Similarly, when spreading waves carrying reflections of Brahman's wish for transformation in Ego, mingled with the whirling waves of Ego in different ways, Mind and fifteen other subtle elements evolved (see sect. 13 below). All the above said eighteen elements, evolved in successive transformations from Nature, were, of course, matterless, because matter had not evolved then. The speeds of rotations in them (though they became less and less with each transformation) were still so high that those elements never coalesced with each other; but always remained separate from one another; except the last five. The five elements, which evolved last in the transformations from Nature, had their speeds of rotation of whirling waves so much reduced that they could combine among their varieties (see sect. 14 below). Their combinations in diverse proportions produced fine particles of five fundamental elements of matter. **That was the origin of matter in Nature**. Before that, there was no matter in any form anywhere. Once matter was evolved universally it furnished enough stuff for creations of Nature; so it changed its course of action, stopped its transformations into fresh subtle elements, and began creations with matter. It began to combine particles of matter in different ways to create different sub atoms, atoms, elements, cells, objects, and body forms. Units of whirling waves of Vital Consciousness that severed from Brahman, came to be enveloped by the aforesaid matterless elements, and as so enveloped they entered into material body forms, and became living beings. Thus, the universe of diverse elements, diverse objects and diverse beings, emerged; and Brahman was the original source of all. It was the subtle vibrations in Brahman that caused their evolution.

We observed that the first happening in Brahman was vibration on account of its wish for creations. Those vibrations never ceased to exist. They began to rotate at their spots. When the rotations became rapid the vibrations became like whirling waves; and in that state they continued ever thereafter and continue now in the things in the universe. The speed of rotations of those whirling waves had risen unimaginably high. Initially, those whirling waves composed matterless elements like Intellect, Mind, etc. with different speeds of rotations. Their speed of rotations became less and less at each successive evolution. Finally, in the last-evolved five matterless elements, the speed of rotations had reached a stage that enabled those elements to combine with their varieties. In such combinations the speed of rotations of whirling waves came down so much, and the waves became so dense, that a good lot of them in each combination formed matter in a very fine form, as in photons. In photon the particle of light, matter exists in a fine trace besides the whirling waves. In the subsequent formations of subatomic particles like electrons, the matter content increased; but the whirling waves also existed conspicuously. Atoms are assemblages of subatomic particles; and every material thing in the universe is an assemblage of atoms. Hence the whirling waves are in every material thing in the universe. Earlier we have noted that they are in all matterless things in the universe. **Thus the vibrations that originally appeared in Brahman continue eternally as whirling waves in all things – material or immaterial – in the universe**. Even the external rotations of stars (see sect. 40 below) may be continuations of the original rotations in Brahman.

## Section 9 **INDIVIDUAL SOUL**

Individual Soul is Soul in an individual. It is the Power of Consciousness (Chaitanyam) abiding in an individual being. Godhead or Sagunabrahman is Cosmic Power of Consciousness. Godhead exists as a cosmic collection of infinite minute whirling waves rotating at an unimaginably high speed; so too, the individual Soul exists as a tiny unit of similar whirling waves. Suggestion seems irresistible that the individual Soul must have originated as a fragment of the Godhead. We noted that, because of the high speed of rotations of whirling waves in the subtle existence of Godhead, units of whirling waves scattered from Godhead, and they became individual Souls. (See p. 22 above). In other words, Souls are conceived to have arisen as fragments of Godhead.

This concept, that the Soul is a fragment of Godhead, is not peculiar to the Indian thought.

The Bible says, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that Spirit of God dwelleth in you." (1 Cor 3:16). When the Spirit of God, the Godhead, is said to dwell in all men, it means clearly that the spirit in each man, the Soul in him, is a fragment of the Godhead.

Quran (32: 7,9) also tells the same wise: "He began the creation of man from clay;... Then He fashioned him and breathed into him of His Spirit.

Munduka Upanishad (2:1:1) states: "As sparks of selfsame form arise in thousands from a blazing fire, so do various beings arise from the Eternal (the Godhead)." In this verse 'beings' denote the Souls in the beings; it is a synecdoche – mention of the whole to denote a part of it.

When water boils, we find molecules of water separating from the mass of water even at the bottom of the vessel and moving up through the water in the vessel. The molecules sever and diffuse from every part of the water in the vessel. Even when it is not heated, the water in the vessel disappears slowly, showing thereby that molecules diffuse from it always, unnoticed by us. Likewise, fragments diffuse from the omnipresent Godhead and move about through Godhead itself, to form Souls.

Upanishads compare the diffusion of fragments from Godhead with the diffusion of sparks from a blazing fire. That simile impresses the similarity of the fragments to the whole. Sparks of fire are fire itself. Every individual Soul is inherently like the Godhead. So, the Chandogya Upanishad (6:8-16) declares "Tat-tvam-asi". 'Tat' signifies Brahman (vide Bhagavad Gita 17:23). 'Tvam' means you; it is a common word that applies to all men, irrespective of position, rank, race, religion, class or caste, 'Asi' is the connective verb 'are'. So, Tattvamasi means you are – every man is – essentially (a part of) Brahman, the Godhead. Because the Soul is covered or enclosed by a subtle body laden with Karmabhavas (vide sec. 10 & 26). It does not shine like Godhead.

It is interesting **to compare the diffusion of Souls from Godhead with the diffusion of molecules or particles of water from the ocean**. Water in the ocean may have salt, and water particles that diffuse from the ocean may not have salt. Godhead has the power of Creation, etc. and the Soul that diffuse from Godhead will never have the power of Creation, etc., not even when they have attained their supreme state (See, Brahmasutras 4:4:14 which ways that a Liberated Soul may have all Godly powers

except the power of Creation, etc.) We continue the simile to the diffusion of particles of water from the ocean. Water particles diffuse from the endless ocean constantly and unnoticeably. After the separation and some wanderings in the atmosphere, most of the water particles reach back to the ocean, as rains, or flow of rivers, and merge in the ocean. Many other water particles enter the bodies of men, animals, and plants, to sustain life in them. In doing so, some water particles that enter a sugarcane plant appear as sweet juice liked by all; and some other similar water particles that enter a strychnos plant (Karaskaram, in Sanskrit) appear as bitter juice disliked by everybody. Their tastes differ only because of association with different materials in the plants they entered, which may be compared to Karmabhavas in the Subtle Bodies in men. (See sect. 26 below). From the bodies of men, animals and plants, the water particles decamp after a time, become dew, fog, or snow, and may later enter the bodies of some other men, animals or plants. A cycle of appearances and disappearances in different forms may go on, till at last the water particles reach back the ocean and merge in it. The story of individual Souls compares well with the above tale of water particles, particularly when we understand the differences in characters and careers of men as reflections of their respective Karmabhavas (as will be explained later below).

**Bhagavad-Gita (15:7) also tells that an individual Soul is a fragment of the Godhead, and that it attracts a Subtle Body to cover it.** The verse reads,

"An eternal fragment of Godhead, becoming a Jiva (Soul) in the world of living beings, attract organs, abiding in Nature, with the mind as the sixth of them"

This verse straightly expresses that an individual Soul is a fragment of the Godhead. It is mentioned as an eternal fragment because it never perishes.

The above said verse tells further that the Soul attracts organs, of which the mind is the sixth. The sensory organs in a man are six, namely, the ear, eye, skin, tongue, nose and the mind. (Vide Manu Smrithi 2:92). The succeeding verse, Gita 15:9, enumerates the above said six organs, indicating in a way by the context that they are the organs referred to in its prior versus. What the Soul attracts, would be adhering to it constantly. In the intervening verse (Bhagavad Gita 15:8) these organs are said to be held by the Soul when it attains a material body (sariram) and when it quits the same. It does not sound logical to think that the Soul holds or carries with it certain "organs" alone when it enters a material body for a birth, or leaves it at a death; it may be that it carries a body that comprises these organs, among others.

Organs are parts of a body, and their utility is only as part of a body. Apart from the body, the organs are of no use to the Soul. So much so, when we hear of an organ, we always think of it as part of a body. The next verse (ibid 15:9) indicates that the Soul enjoys the sensations – hearing, seeing, etc. – through the six organs mentioned above. Organs as separate entities apart from the body cannot grasp any sensations; so the reference to these organs can only be as parts of a body. So, in the above said verse, Gita must be meaning a body when it speaks of organs. It is a figure of speech, synecdoche, to mention a part for the whole. 'Get a strong hand to pull it out' means to call a strong man to help; 'the port is filled with sails' means the port is full of ships. **Likewise, when the Gita says that the Soul holds certain organs, it means that the Soul bears a body that comprises the organs.**

As Soul is matterless, it cannot attract a physical organ that has mass and weight. It can attract to itself only matterless organs – the Subtle Organs detailed in sect. 13 (iv) below.

It may be that, not only the six sensory organs, but all matterless organs are attracted by the Soul. When the Soul attracts, those organs cling to the Soul, and their assemblage around the Soul constitutes a covering or body to the Soul.

What sort of body it is, is also indicated in the above said verses of Bhagavad Gita. We know for certain that a Soul quitting the material body is invisible and undetectable even through any ultra microscope. If it holds any visible thing, its departure would have been detectible. So the body, that a Soul bears when it quits the material body, must be **invisible**. Further, the verse 15:7 tells that the Soul "attracts organs **abiding in Nature**." Organs of the physical body are not said to abide in nature; they are said to exist in body. Organs that abide in Nature are the Subtle Organs evolved in transformations of Nature. They are invisible like Intellect or Mind.(see sect. 13 (iv) below). These two characteristics – invisibility, and abiding in Nature – affirm that the reference is to the matterless Subtle Organs or the invisible body which comprises them.

The verse, Bhagavad-Gita 15:8, to which some reference was made above, reads,

"When the Soul attains a material body, and when it goes out, it moves carrying these, just as the wind (carries) scents from their sources".

In this verse, the pronoun 'these' (ethani) refers to the "organs" mentioned in the preceding verse. The verse tells that, when the Soul attains a material body, that is, when the Soul enters the body form of a sperm to take a birth, and also when the Soul quits the material body at death, on both occasions, the Soul holds the same organs that are mentioned in the prior verse. We have found above that the term 'organs' in the context signify an invisible body. What the Soul has when it enters, it must have had even before that entry; that is to say, in its pre-birth stage. What the Soul has when it quits, it must continue to have thereafter also, that is, in the post-death stage. What the Soul has, both at the entry and at the exit, it must have in the interval also, that is to say, during its stay in the material body – in other words, during the life. Summing up we get that **the Soul has its invisible body, before birth, during life, and after death – in short, at all times, always.** In this connection, it is worthy of note that, in Life After Life, Dr. Moody has reported that certain revived patients had told him of their having felt to have an invisible body with all organs, when they remained discarnate in the atmosphere before their revival.

This verse (Gita 15:8) tells further that the Soul carries its invisible body, as the wind carries scents from their sources (flowers, perfumes, etc.). We know that the wind carrying a scent is inseparably united with the scent. So the above said simile implies that the Soul is inseparably united with its invisible body. It is as if the Soul and its invisible body form one unit. Because of such constant union, **a reference to Soul normally denotes the Soul as covered by its invisible body**, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise.

## Section 10 **SUBTLE BODY**

**The invisible body that covers a Soul is called a Subtle Body**, or Sukshmasariram in Sanskrit. Sankhyas call it Lingasariram. The Bible calls it Spiritual Body. Certain Western philosophers call it Incorporeal body; certain others call it Astral body; some others call it Ethereal body; Swami Vivekananda called it Fine body. Everybody calls it as a body with distinguishing adjective indicating its subtleness. **The name 'body' simply, denotes the physical body only**.

The reference to the Subtle Body in Bhagavad Gita (15:8) has been adverted to in the preceding section. The reference to it in the Bible runs thus:

"How are the dead raised, and with what body do they come?
..................................................................
It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body.
There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body." (1 Cor. 15:35, 44)

'Spiritual body is the Subtle Body. 'Natural body' is any material body. When the Bible says "It is sown a natural body", it means that the Soul is implanted in a material body to become a man or other being. When a Soul is embedded in a sperm, the minute body of the sperm becomes a natural body to the Soul. (See Mahanarayana Upanishad 1:1). Then the sperm becomes a living being capable of moving forward in a mucous field by whip lashing its tail. When the sperm unites with an ovum and grows into a man, the physical body becomes the natural body of the Soul. The above versus say further that, besides the natural body, the Soul has a spiritual body, and that, on the Judgment Day, the Soul rises in that spiritual body.

Body is an assemblage of organs. **The Subtle Body also is an assemblage of organs.** As the Subtle Body is invisible, all its organs are invisible. They are said to be matterless rudiments which function like the physical organs in a mysterious way. They are called **Subtle Organs**. In the dream state and the discarnate state, it is through these Subtle Organs that the Soul experiences sensations. Through the Subtle eye it sees persons and things; through the Subtle ear it hears talks and other sounds, through the Subtle nose it smells scents; and so on. Vision needs an eye, hearing needs an ear. Since the sensations, vision, hearing, etc. are not experienced through the organs of physical body, it seems certain that the Soul has another (invisible) body thorough whose organs it experiences the sensations in dreams and in the afterlife.

Sri Sankaracharya, in his work Vivekachudamani (verse 97), says,
"The Lingasariram, having also the name Sukumarasariram, which bears Karmabhavas (vasanas) that bring about the experiencing of fruits of action, is composed of uncombined elements (apanchikritabhutasambhavam)."

We noted (p.    above) that the last five of the Subtle elements that were produced by Nature in its transformations, combined among themselves and thereby evolved the five fundamental elements of matter. The process by which they combined is called Panchikaranam. (See sect.14 below). In Sanskrit, the products of panchikaranam are mentioned as Panchikritabhutas. They are the fine particles of matter. In contrast with them, the elements that do not come under the above said category are mentioned as **Apanchikritabhutas**. They are elements that came to existence before the evolution of matter through Panchikaranam. They are the Subtle elements, Intellect, Ego, Mind, the

ten Subtle Organs and the five Tanmatras. (They will be detailed in sect. 13 below). They are all matterless elements. They remain as distinct elements; but, in the Subtle Body, they assemble somewhat close to one another, to cooperate in functions. The Subtle Body is constituted by the assemblage of such matterless elements; so **the Subtle Body is also matterless.**

Bhagavad Gita (15:7) indicates that the Subtle Body was formed on attraction by the Soul. We observed that the Soul is a unit of whirling waves of the power of Consciousness that detached from the Sagunabrahman. When it glided about, it attracted bits of Subtle elements that existed in the Nature. As that bit of vital principle, the Soul, was itself matterless; it attracted only matterless elements. When the latter gathered around it, they enveloped it completely and formed a complete covering to it. That covering is the Subtle Body. The bit of vital principle that is thus within the Subtle Body is the Soul. So, from the very inception the Subtle Body had a Soul at its centre. As the Soul (Life) remains within the Subtle Body, the Subtle Body never perishes. The physical body perishes when the Soul departs from it. But the Subtle Body remains eternal, because the Soul dwells in it constantly and permanently. **A Soul without a Subtle Body never exists (except the Cosmic Soul); and no Subtle Body ever exists without a Soul at its centre**. As a Soul without a Subtle Body never exists, a reference to Soul normally means a Soul covered by its Subtle Body, unless the context clearly shows otherwise.

Brahmasutras (4:2:8) says that a Subtle Body lasts up to the Final Liberation of the Soul, when the Soul would merge in Godhead. It signifies that the Soul has the Subtle Body throughout its existence. That is what Gita (15:8) also implied (as we found above). The Biblical observation (2 Cor 4:18),

"The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." holds good to the physical body and the Subtle Body.

Since a Soul never exists without a Subtle Body to cover it, and the contents of the Subtle Body play a large part in the actions and experiences of the Soul, a comprehensive knowledge of the Soul must include a knowledge of the Subtle Body in some detail. We may therefore advert to the details of the Subtle Body, herein below.

## Section 11 **CREATIONS OF NATURE**

As the Soul originated from Godhead, the Subtle Body originated from the Primal Nature (Prakriti). Niralamba Upanishad says that Nature created the manifold universe "in the presence of Brahman". Very often the name Brahman is used in Upanishads to denote Sagunabrahman who is the Cosmic Vital Principle of Consciousness. **Nature cannot create anything without dynamic cooperation of the vital Principle of Consciousness**. Nature can create eggs in the womb of a bird; but it can do it, only if the Principle of Consciousness (life) is present in the bird. Nature can hatch a chick in an egg, or sprout a plant from a seed, but it can do so only if the vital Principle of Consciousness, the life, is present in the egg or the seed. So, Bhagavad Gita (9:10) says,

"With God presiding, the Nature creates the world of movable and immovable beings."

Movable beings are the animal kingdom, and immovable beings are the plant kingdom. Nature has the elements with it; it can create different body forms with those elements; but none of them will become a man or other being unless a small fragment of the vital Principle of Consciousness comes to dwell in it. Sagunabrahman or Godhead is the universal vital Principle of Consciousness. It diffuses particle like fragments from it. When one such fragment of the Principle of Consciousness enters a body form, and then only, the body form will become a live being. So, to create a being, the presence of Sagunabrahman is essential. Hence, the Upanishads say that Nature makes creations in the presence of Brahman.

This is true even in regard to creations by its own transformations. When Sagunabrahman, that is the Principle of Consciousness reflected on Nature when it was thinking of transformation, a part of Nature transformed as Intellect. It reflected Consciousness related to particular objects, facts, principles, etc. It remained a separate entity; so it became a distinct element. As Sagunabrahman reflected on Intellect, when it was thinking of itself and its own interests, a part of the intellect transformed as the element of Ego. Its characteristic is consciousness of self and self-interests. When Sagunabrahman reflected on Ego while it conceived pleasures, a part of Ego transformed as Mind, which always thinks of pleasures and schemes to achieve them. When Sagunabrahman reflected on Ego while it thought of actions to attain self-interests, another part of Ego transformed as Subtle Organs. Every transformation or creation by Nature depended on Sagunabrahman, the Principle of Consciousness. **As the products of transformations of Nature remained eternally as independent entities they are called elements**.

Section 12 **ELEMENTS OF NATURE**

Elements of Nature are of two kinds – Subtle elements and Gross elements. The Subtle elements are the eighteen elements that emerged from Nature in successive transformations (See p. 21-22 above). It was from the last five of those 18 elements that the gross elements evolved. They are elements of matter. Till then there was no matter in any form anywhere. So, **the 18 elements, which arose before the evolution of matter, were all matterless. Matterless elements are generally called Subtle elements**. Being matterless, they cannot exist in a solid, liquid or gaseous state, **they exist only as units of whirling waves**.

Sankhyakarika (22) describes the evolution of Subtle elements, thus:

"From the Primal Nature (emerged) Intellect; From Intellect (emerged) Ego;
From Ego (emerged) sixteen elements; From five of those sixteen (emerged) five gross elements."

The 16 elements that emerged from Ego are detailed in subsequent verses; they are,

**Mind, Ten Subtle Organs, and Five Tanmatras.**

All the above mentioned sixteen, and Intellect and Ego are Subtle elements. Of them, the first thirteen, namely, Intellect, Ego, Mind, and ten Subtle Organs, are sensitive and active. They are capable of receiving sensations from the physical organs, and reacting

to them, and causing actions in physical organs. These thirteen are therefore called **Karanas**. (cf. Sankhyakarika 32). In Sanskrit, the term 'Karana' signifies 'means of action'. The last five of the Subtle elements, namely the five varieties of Tanmatras, are insensible and inactive. They are capable only of passing, or holding, very subtle waves.

Intellect decides actions; Ego sets goals for actions; Mind directs actions; and Subtle Organs prompt the performance of actions by the physical organs. Thus all the Karanas are, in one way or other, engaged in the performance of actions or works. Among these Karanas, Intellect, Ego and Mind, stay in the interior of the Subtle Body, and the ten Subtle Organs remain around them. So, the three – Intellect, Ego and Mind – are referred to as Internal Karanas, or Antahkaranas in Sanskrit. Antah, in Sanskrit, means the interior.

Sankhyakarika (33) observes that the Internal Karanas function in all the three times – the past, the present and the future. The other Karanas, namely the Subtle Organs, function only in the present. The eyes see only the present form of an object; they cannot see its past form, or future form. The ears hear only a present sound, and not a past sound or a future sound. But, Intellect, Ego and Mind, can visualize past, present and future states or conditions of things, and shape their actions accordingly. Further, the Internal Karanas exercise volitions and discretions in their functions; but the other Karanas, the Subtle Organs, have not the capacity for volitions or discretions, and they act according to the biddings of the Mind, their master. So, the Intellect, Mind and Ego are said to be sensitive organs, and the Subtle Organs semi-sensitive.

**Like fragments of Brahman, fragments of the Subtle elements of Nature also diffused in Space.** When fragments of Vital Principle of Consciousness that diffused from Godhead glided in the Space, they attracted fragments of the Subtle elements existing near about (Bhagavad-Gita 15:7). As the latter gathered around the fragment of Vital Principle, they enveloped it completely. In doing so, the subtlest among them, the Intellect, went to the inmost and enwrapped the fragment of Vital Principle directly. Mind which was the next subtlest, enveloped Intellect. Around the Mind the ten Subtle Organs assembled, side by side, to form one covering by all of them. Ego did not enwrap anything, but stayed between Intellect and Mind, to induce either, to pursue self-interests and to avoid arduous spiritual pursuits. **When all the Karanas had thus assembled around a fragment of Vital Principle, Nature set a compact layer of Tanmatras around the assemblage, to constitute a subtle tegument (like a skin) to it.** That completed a Subtle Body around the fragment of Vital Principle. Then that fragment became a distinct entity, which came to be called an **individual Soul**. Such is the relation of the elements of Nature to the Soul.

Now, we may advert to those elements themselves to understand their nature of working.

## Section 13 **SUBTLE ELEMENTS**

i. Intellect:

Many persons think Intellect as a faculty of the brain. Medical science tells that, since an affection of brain by drugs, like alcohol or LSD, affects mental activities, Mind and Intellect are faculties of the brain; and consequently it declares that, on decay of the brain, Mind and Intellect cease to exist. But, the Indian philosophers regard Mind and Intellect to be two Subtle elements that exist independently of the brain.

That a disorder in the brain perverts one's actions, is no indication of identity of Intellect with the brain. Decisions for action made by Intellect, are not conveyed direct to the physical organs; they are first conveyed to the Mind, which elaborates them into specific actions to be executed by particular organs, and then transmits impulses, containing stimuli for those detailed actions, to the brain to be relayed in the physical way to the particular physical organs for accomplishment (See sect. 22 below). If the brain happens to be in disorder in a person, naturally the relay of the impulses by the brain will be distorted, and consequently his actions will become perverted. If lens in the camera is defective, the photo will be ugly; it is not an indication of the shape of the object concerned. It is just the same way with relays from the brain also. So, perversion of actions following a disorder in the brain is no indication of identity of Mind or Intellect with the brain.

The doctors who conducted researches on death experiences of resuscitated patients, have unanimously expressed that those patients saw and remembered correctly all that happened to their dead body before their revival. Evidently, in the interval between death and revival, no brain was with the discarnate Soul. If cognitions and memories were with the brain, a discarnate Soul, which has no brain with it, could not have known and remembered the happenings in that interval. The very fact that the above said patients could, on their revival, tell correctly the treatments actually given to their dead bodies, shows beyond doubt that those patients did see and remember those occurrences correctly. It reveals that Intellect, which cognized the sights and recalled them to memory, was not with the brain of the dead body, but was with the Soul when it was out of the body and floating discarnate in the atmosphere. Dr. Ian Stevenson's researches went further and proved that memories of a life may be carried by a Soul to its next life, which may be years later. He found particular children , even of two years or below, in different countries of the East and the West, remembering correctly many incidents of their prior life. It shows positively that the memories of those incidents were not in the brain that perished at the end of their prior life, but were in the custody of the Soul in its sojourns from death to rebirth. Subtle Body alone was with the Soul when it went out of the material body; it alone remained with the Soul in its discarnate state. It becomes pretty clear that **Intellect is not in the brain, or with the brain, but it forms part of the Subtle Body of the Soul**.

The performances of Intellect show that it is an independent agent. **It is Intellect that decides the acts to be done from time to time**. It is Intellect that recalls memories, and displays them as knowledge, faith, affection, etc. Intellect exhibits large discretions and discriminations. Whether one shall vote for Party A, or for Party B, or refrain from voting, at an election, depends on the discretion of one's Intellect. The exercise of volitions and discretions by Intellect shows Intellect to be an independent agent. It is not a mechanical faculty of an organ of the gross material body; it is a distinct sensitive element in the Subtle Body.

ii. Ego

Sankhyakarika (24) defines Ego as the element of self-consciousness. **Ego urges Mind and Intellect to promote self-interests in the world**. Ego works as if it is conscious that the Soul's attachment to God will cause its suppression; so, it urges Intellect to pursue worldly pleasures, to fascinate the Soul. **What the Catholic theology depicts as the work of a demon against spiritual pursuits, the Indian philosophy describes as the work of Ego in the Subtle Body of the person.** Ego always whispers to Intellect that God is elusive, but the worldly pleasures are easily enjoyable. As body is the means to enjoy worldly pleasures, Ego induces Intellect to regard the body as the most important asset in life; in other words, Ego excites body-consciousness. Attachment to the body is stimulus of Ego.

The Bible warns, "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit" (Gal 5:17)

Sanskrit texts on funeral rites mention that a departed Soul would hover about the dead body, in slowly widening circles and return to the body side often, until it accompanies the funeral procession, to witness disposal of the body. Theravada Buddhist Principles (Book II p 119) also alludes to the departed Soul's staying about the dead body until it is cremated. Statements of certain resuscitated patients cited in Life After Life, referred to concern felt by them when they saw doctors pounding on the chest of their dead body. They indicate the influence of Ego on discarnate Souls. To exert such influence, Ego must have been with the discarnate Soul when it floated in the atmosphere. Ego must therefore be staying in the Subtle Body, which alone remains with the Soul in its discarnate state. **Ego also is an element in the Subtle Body.**

iii. Mind:

Of the 16 elements that evolved in transformations of Ego, the Mind is the most active. Because of its extra activities, it rarely stays long on one thought, but skips from thought to thought unnoticeably. Still, it is always subservient to its grand-originator, the Intellect. Whatever Intellect decides, Mind will carry out through the physical organs. Mind is the master of all organs. Mind envelopes Intellect; therefore all sensations perceived by the physical organs first reach the mind; and Mind conveys them to Intellect for its cognition. Conversely, when Intellect decides for an action, it conveys the decision to the Mind; and Mind elaborates it into specific actions to be carried out by particular organs, and issues necessary impulses, through the brain, to the organs for performance. Thus, to the Intellect, Mind serves both as an organ of sense and as an organ of action. So, the Mind is reckoned as an organ, the eleventh organ, in Manusmrithi (2:92), Bhagavad-Gita (13:6), etc.

Mind may exercise its own volition or discretion when it deems necessary to do so. If the sensation of a leg unexpectedly touching a hot metal reaches Mind, it will not wait for Intellect's decision for remedial action. Mind quickly reacts, and directs the leg to withdraw immediately from the perilous touch. The leg at once pulls off with a jerk. It is thereafter the affair is conveyed to Intellect. Normally, sensations reaching Mind are instantaneously passed to Intellect, and Intellect decides the action to be had thereon. But, in the above said case, the action is had without knowledge of Intellect. The Intellect comes to know of the hot touch, and the leg's withdrawal, only after the affair is over. It is the deviation from the normal course that causes a jerk in the leg's pull-

out. This incident clearly shows an exercise of volition or discretion by the Mind. **It shows that Mind acts as an independent agent in our system**.

Mind is the seat of emotions like love, aversion, fear, etc. Certain persons may feel an aversion towards an individual for no obvious reason, or an inborn fear to enter a pond or a river even when a friend shows it to be hip-deep only. Such unaccountable emotions can only be reactions of experiences in prior life. The survival of such emotions after death shows that Mind does not perish with brain, but does with the departing Soul. Statements of revived patients to Dr. Moody about emotions felt after departure from the body, also showed that Mind, which is the source and seat of emotions, remains with the Soul, and not in or with the brain in the body. **The Mind also is a part of the Subtle Body of the Soul**.

iv. Subtle Organs

Subtle Organs are the organs in the Subtle Body. They are said to have emerged in transformations of Ego. They are called **'organs'**, because they function in the Subtle Body much like the physical organs do in the physical body. They are characterized as **'Subtle'**, because they are matterless like the Mind. They are deemed to have originated when the Principle of Consciousness reflected on Ego when it thought of means to attain particular purposes. When the Principle of Consciousness reflected on Ego while it thought of seeing things, a part of Ego transformed into the Subtle Organ of eye; while it thought of hearing sounds, the transformation was as the Subtle Organ of ear; while it thought of grasping things, a part of it transformed as the Subtle Organ of hand; while it thought of expressing its inclinations, the transformation was as the Subtle Organ of speech; and so on; **five Subtle Organs of sense and five Subtle Organs of action are said to have evolved in transformations of Ego**.

**The normal experiences of dreams prove the existence of Subtle Organs with us.** In dreams, we see persons, places and incidents, we talk and hear talks, we walk through buildings and gardens, etc. Seeing, hearing, talking, walking etc. are primarily the works of organs. If they are not had through physical organs, there must necessarily be other like organs in our system to enable us to experience them. As those organs are not visible, they must be subtle like Mind and Intellect. So, they are called Subtle Organs. As all the actions that are experienced throughout the physical organs are experienced through Subtle Organs at dreams, there must be Subtle Organs corresponding to all our physical organs. In other words, the body form that comprises the Subtle Organs must be a complete body form. Life After Life shows that the revived subjects of Dr. Moody told just the same thing as their experience in the disembodied state.

The Subtle Organs were the last in the series of sensitive elements, or Karanas, that emerged in Nature. The earlier elements, Intellect, Ego and Mind, were highly sensitive; and they exercised volitions and discretions in their functions. Subtle Organs were only semi-sensitive; they did not exercise any volition or discretion, on their part. They did not initiate actions on their own volition. They functioned as intermediaries between the brain and the Mind. From the brain, they received sensations that came from the physical organs, and transmitted them to the mind. From the mind they received impulses for detailed actions and passed them to the brain, to be relayed to the physical organs. When physical perceptions and bodily actions reflect in the Subtle

Organs, such reflections occur as parallel perceptions or parallel actions in the Subtle Organs; and it is such parallel occurrences that are cognized or experienced by Mind, Intellect and Soul. (Vide Sect. 21-23 below).

Extra sensory perceptions (ESP) are said to be possible. In that case the Subtle Organs may be receiving perceptions direct from external sources, without intervention of the physical organs and brain.

v. Tanmatras

Among the Subtle elements of Nature, the last to evolve were five varieties of Tanmatras. They also emerged in transformations of Ego, and were matterless. But the speed of rotations of the whirling waves in them was so low that the waves became rather condensed, and the Tanmatras became insensitive and inactive. Like the other Subtle elements, the **Tanmatras also diffused everywhere in the Space**.

Bhavanopanishad gives the names of the 5 Tanmatras as **Sound-tanmatra, Touch-tanmatra, Form-tanmatra, Taste-tanmatra and Smell-tanmatra** (Sabda sparsa rupa rasa gandhah panchatanmatrah). They function as media to pass or transmit the respective sensations. It may be Form-tanmatras that carry or transmit reflections of the forms of objects to the eyes. When those reflections are transmitted by the eyes to the Intellect, through the brain, we cognize vision of those objects. It may be the Form tanmatras that bring light from stars to Earth. Scientists say that light travels as electromagnetic waves at a super speed. Many stars that are seen or detected by scientists, are millions of billions kilometers away from the Earth. (In this book a billion is a million millions as in the British reckoning). Lightwaves from the stars travel all that distance to reach Earth. Scientists do not tell the medium through which the light waves travel from the stars to the Earth. The light waves can pass through laboratory vacuums. So the medium that passes them must exist in such vacuums as well. The Subtle elements, Tanmatras, are said to exist everywhere, throughout space. For aught we know, it may be the Form-tanmatras that pass the light waves from the stars to us. Likewise, it may be the Sound-tanmatras that pass the Subtle Radio waves. Our ears are not able to grasp sounds brought by radio-waves; they can hear those sounds only when they are brought by sound waves to which our radio may transmit them. Sound waves travel in air, but not radio waves. On July 20, 1969, when Neil Armstrong was on the moon, radio waves carrying messages, passed between him and President Richard Nixon. Air does not exist beyond earth's atmosphere. It may be Sound-tanmatras that passed the radio waves between moon and Earth. Smells and tastes (scents and flavors) are said to spread as superfine vapors. Their vaporizations generate very subtle waves which spread through the respective Tanmatras. Men are not able to grasp the scents and flavors carried by those subtle waves passing through the Tanmatras. Celestial persons are said to enjoy them. (See Chandogya Upanishad 3:6:1, Bible, Gen 8:21). It is because of this concept that the Hindus make their food offerings to gods and manes as hot as possible, to facilitate optimum vaporization of their flavors, to cause optimum waves of taste for the gratification of the celestials.

As the Tanmatras are matterless, they do not offer any resistance or retardation to the passage of subtle waves through them; so the light waves, radio waves, and other similar waves can freely pass through them. In that regard, the Tanmatras, though insensible and inactive, conceives that, when the attractions of Soul brought all Karanas

to assemble around it, Nature set a compact layer of Tanmatras as a tegument to cover that assemblage. Further it is said that the Tanmatras, by their mutual combinations, gave rise to the gross elements that composed matter.

Section 14 **GROSS ELEMENTS**

In the transformations of Ego, sensitivity was fast diminishing at each step. The first product, the Mind, was highly sensitive and vigorously active. It had capacity for volitions and discretions. The second product, the Subtle Organs, was semi-sensitive without capacity for volition or discretion. Their capacity was to sustain parallel actions corresponding to actions of the physical organs, and conversely to produce actions which cause parallel actions in the physical organs. (See sect. 21-23 below). The last of the products, the Tanmatras, were insensitive and inactive. Their capacity was only to hold, or pass, very subtle waves. The speed of rotations of the whirling waves that composed them was the lowest among the Subtle elements.

The sensitive and semi-sensitive elements remained always as independent elements; but the insensitive Tanmatras could fuse together and thereby give rise to new products of different nature. Tanmatras were the first ever elements to enter combinations, which they did in a peculiar manner. It is said that, in a batch of five Tanmatras, one from each variety, a half of one Tanmatra united with one-eighth of each of the other four Tanmatras and the products were five fine particles of gross elements. **This process of fivefold combination is called Panchi-karanam** in Sanskrit; and its products are the Panchamahabhutas, which term means 'the five fundamental elements'. They were very fine particles containing traces of matter. **Their formation was the origination of matter**. Before their formation, there were only packs of whirling waves, but no matter in any form anywhere. To distinguish from the matterless Subtle elements, the elements containing matter were called 'gross elements'. **The five gross elements thus formed were named Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Either.** The gross elements formed by the union of half of a Smell-tanmatra with one-eighth of each of the other four Tanmatras was a very fine particle of Earth; the product of union of half of a Taste-tanmatra with one-eighth of the other four Tanmatras was a very fine particle of Water; and so on. It may be noted that the fundamental element of Earth is not a particle of earth that is soil; nor is the fundamental element of Water molecule of the liquid that is aqua; nor is the element of Fire the flame of a combustion. Soil and aqua are not elements; they are compounds of different elements, and flame is the combination of oxygen with burnable material. But the fundamental gross elements of Earth, Water, Fire, etc. are conceived to be single elements which cannot disintegrate.

When matter had thus evolved, Nature ceased its transformations for producing elements for creations. As the particles of matter that evolved from Tanmatras were everywhere in the vast Space, they provided ample stuff for Nature to create objects and body forms. So, thereafter the creations by Nature were with the gross elements. When Souls came to dwell in body forms, they brought with them Subtle elements in the form of Subtle Bodies. So, man and every living being have both body forms – a material body and a Subtle Body (a natural body and a spiritual body).

Indian philosophy conceives all material things in the universe to be composed of the above said five gross elements. It is interesting to note that the Christina philosophy also conceives all material objects to have been composed of four fundamental

elements – Earth, Water, Fire and Air. Thus the ancient sages found that matter originated from matterless elements. Matterless elements are called Subtle elements; and elements that have matter are called Gross elements. The material body or physical body is composed of Gross elements; the Subtle Body is composed of Subtle elements.

## Section 15 **SHEATHS OF SOUL**

The Subtle Body is conceived to comprise three layers, which are called **sheaths**, or **kosas** in Sanskrit. They are called sheaths because they envelope the **Soul completely**.

The external sheath of Soul is the material body. It is called **annamayakosa**, because it is formed of matter gathered from the food taken by the person or his mother earlier when he was an embryo or fetus. In Sanskrit, 'Anna' means food; 'maya' means composed of ; and 'kosa' is sheath. So, literally Annamayakosa is a sheath composed of food matter.

To name the physical body as a covering to the Soul seems to involve some incongruity. Firstly, the disproportion of the sizable body to the Soul, which is said to be much smaller than a sub atom, is striking. It seems strange to depict such a relatively big thing as a mere covering. Secondly, the purpose and function of the body do not seem to cover the Soul, but to do many works and gather pleasures for enjoyment of the Soul. The Soul dwells in the body, not the body covers the Soul. But the Upanishads are unanimous to mention the physical body as a covering to the Soul and call it Annamayakosa.

At pages 53 above, we hinted that the Subtle Body exists in 3 layers composed by the 13 Karanas (Intellect, Ego, Mind and the ten Subtle Organs). Those layers form three concentric sheaths to the Soul. Intellect, which directly envelopes the Soul, is the first sheath. It is called **Vijnanamayakosa**, the sheath of Intellect. Mind is conceived to develop Intellect, and thereby form a second sheath to the Soul. It is called **Manomayakosa**, the sheath of Mind. The ten Subtle Organs together form one covering around the Mind and thereby constitute a third sheath to the Soul. It is called **Pranamayakosa**. Painmgala Upanishad (2:3) defines that these three sheaths compose the Subtle Body. ("Etat kosathrayam lingasariram.") These three sheaths may be dealt separately in sections that follow.

Ego does not envelop anything, either by itself or in company with other elements. It forms no sheath, or part of a sheath, to the Soul. So, certain philosophers, who regard only the three sheaths to compose the Subtly Body, do not count Ego as a component of the Subtle Body. Ego is conceived to remain, between the sheath of Intellect and the sheath of Mind, as a free entity, free to influence either, to promote hedonism and body-consciousness. As it stays permanently in the Subtle Body, it is regarded as part of the Subtle Body, in Sankhyakarika (40) and other texts. They reckon Ego as a component of the Subtle Body. No Subtle Body ever exists without the element of Ego in it. As it stays in the Subtle Body, it can never be got rid of completely. Intellect, by its superior powers may repel its influences, but nobody can ever be certain that Ego has been suppressed for ever.

Upanishads speak of another sheath to the Soul, which is called **Anandamayakosa**, the sheath of bliss. Ananda, in Sanskrit, literally means joy, pleasure or bliss. In

philosophy it means a state of freedom from miseries. The sheath of bliss is conceived to be inside the sheath of Intellect, that is to say, between the Soul and the Intellect. Sri Sankaracharya, in Vivekachudamani (verses 207, 208), says that this sheath manifests fully in deep sleep, and shortly in the wakeful state and the dreaming state when the Soul experiences joy on contact with, or on perception of, beloved objects. A Soul that experiences great misery in the wakeful state (on account of disease, injury, separation, poverty, or the like), does not feel any misery during deep sleep. So, Indian philosophy conceives that, in the deep sleep, the Soul is covered by a sheath of bliss, which screens off the miseries. It is through Intellect, that is to say, in contact with the sheath of Intellect, that the Soul experiences miseries; so, it is deemed that in deep sleep and on occasions of joy during the other states, the contact with Intellect is intercepted by the intervention of a Sheath Of Bliss between the Soul and the Intellect. Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (4:2:21) observes,

"A man, well embraced by his beloved lady, does not know anything outside or inside". (priyaya sthriya samparishvakta na bahyam kinchana veda na aantharam).

When one is fully immersed in joy he does not know anything else. So, his Soul is said to be covered by a Sheath that excludes all other knowledge or feelings which normally reach through Intellect.

**Anandamayakosa** is a **transient affair**. Sri Sankaracharya said clearly that, in the wakeful state, the sheath of bliss manifests when joy is experienced. It implies that this sheath vanishes when the joy disappears. It does not exist always around the Soul, it does not exist when the Soul experiences misery, grief or pain; it is a sheath that exists only at intervals. Annamayakosa, Manomayakosa, and Pranamayakosa are eternal to the Soul as parts of its Subtle Body.

When we conceive matterless elements as packs of whirling waves (vide, p.16 above), we come to understand that the sheaths of Intellect, Mind and Subtle Organs, are layers of whirling waves of Consciousness of different varieties rotating or spinning at different speeds. If rotations of the whirling waves in the Soul are at about 100 billion rounds per second, those in Intellect may be about 50 billion, in the Mind about 40 billion, and in the Subtle Organs about 10 to 15 billion per second, or something like that. They may be very much higher in each; but they differ so widely among the elements. So, they easily remain as separate layers. When an action occurs in any such element, its whirling waves may expand and contract, compress and rarefy, or quicken and slacken in speed of rotation, within limits; and their reactions will be carried further by the spreading waves that emanate from them.

## Section 16 **VIJNANAMAYAKOSA**

**Vijnana-maya-kosa is Intellect itself**, enveloping the Soul directly. 'Vijnana' in Sanskrit normally means knowledge, wisdom, which are only aspects of Intellect; but here, it denotes Intellect itself. So, literally Vijnanamayakosa is a sheath composed of Intellect.

As the Soul is completely enveloped by Intellect, the Soul can contact other objects or elements, only through the Intellect. The Soul knows the perceptions, sensations and experiences, gathered by the organs, only through the Intellect. So, a Soul fond of

worldly pleasures, or curious of material objects, clings to Intellect, to share its contacts and experiences. **It clings so intimately that it is said to identify itself with the Intellect enveloping it**. By such identification the Soul experiences all that Intellect experiences – pleasures and pains, desires and disappointments, pieties and depravities, knowledge and misunderstanding etc. By that identification the Soul experiences the works done by the organs, and consequently becomes bound to experience their consequences. Practically, the identification of Soul with Intellect is a reality with the worldly men; so much so many persons even think that the Soul and Intellect are one.

Soul's intelligence should not be attributed to its association with Intellect. Soul is intelligent, because it is the very Principle of Consciousness itself; Intellect is intelligent because Consciousness reflects in it.

Intellect which decides and direct actions is not the Soul; it is a totally distinct element of Nature. When Mind is calm and peaceful, if one thinks of a wrong action, one will invariably feel a soft, but clear, protest in the interior. That protest is by the Soul against the wrong thought of Intellect. It shows that they are distinct from each other.

## Section 17 **MANOMAYAKOSA**

Next to the above said Vijnanamayakosa is the Manomayakosa. **It is Mind itself**, which completely envelopes Intellect which envelopes the Soul. Manas, in Sanskrit, is the Mind. It forms, a second covering to the Soul. Reaching through Intellect, the Soul can contact the Mind, and even identify itself with the Mind, to share its desires, emotions, and thoughts. In this way the Soul experiences love and aversion, anger and fear, joy and sorrow, craving, revenge, etc. Since communication between Mind and Soul can be had only through Intellect which is more powerful than the Mind, it is up to Intellect to countervail any emotion or thought of Mind, before it reaches the Soul.

Men generally say that the Mind is fickle, and is prone to wander far and wide; but Mind envelopes the Soul, therefore it cannot travel away from the Soul. Remaining in its own place, Mind can perceive the sensations being grasped by the sensory organs, actions being done by the other organs, and re-view the reflections of past sensations and past actions preserved in the Subtle Body (see sect. 26 below), and construct its own images of imagination. Of course, when the Mind reviews the reflections of prior sensations and actions had long ago, those sensations and actions re-occur to the Mind quite vividly. Within the Subtle Body, the whirling waves of Mind may expand and contract; but Mind as such does not go out of the Subtle Body, to view external objects.

## Section 18 **PRANAMAYAKOSA**

Around the sheath of Mind are the ten Subtle Organs, remaining side by side, close to one another, to form one sheath by all of them, so that all the Subtle Organs have equal contact or access to the Mind. This third sheath is called Prana-maya-kosa. In Sanskrit, 'prana' means life, breath, vital air, or organ. In the present context of forming the outer layer of Subtle Body, **'prana' means Organs**. Upanishads freely use the word 'prana' to mean organs in many contexts, as in Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 1:5:21, 2:1:17, 18, 3:2:11, 4:3:7, 4:4;6, Chandogya Upanishad 2:6:1, 4:3:4, 5:1:15, Mundaka Upanishad 2:1:8, 2:2:5, Prasna Upanishad 4:1, etc. **Pranamayakosa literally means a**

**sheath composed of organs**. In the context of the Subtle Body, the related organs can only be the Subtle Organs.

Based on the meaning of the word 'prana' as vital air, some philosophers have defined Pranamayakosa as a sheath of vital airs. But, the vital airs are normal atmospheric air that performs certain works in the physical body. (vide p. 13-14 above). So, they are composed of atoms. All atoms contain matter. Anything that contains matter cannot be a part of the matterless Subtle Body. So, Pranamayakosa which is a part of the Subtle Body cannot contain the vital airs. We noted Sri Sankaracharya's description of the Subtle Body in Vivekachudamani (97), as composed of (apanchikritabhutas) uncombined elements, which are only Intellect, Ego, Mind, the ten Subtle Organs, and five Tanmatras (see p 26-27 above). Vital airs are not in that category. Commenting on the expression "asaktam samsarati" in Sankhyakarika (40) commentators like Gaudapada, Vachaspati, and Cole Brooke, have observed that **the Subtle Body can pass unimpeded through mountains and rocks**. In Life After Life, **resuscitated persons are also said to have stated that, in their discarnate state, they had moved through walls, closed doors, ceilings, and metal plates, without feeling any obstruction.** It means that their Souls with Subtle Bodies passed through walls, etc. without obstruction. Air cannot pass through them. If Subtle Body contains air in its Pranamayakosa, it cannot also pass through them; nor can a Soul which is covered by the Subtle Body containing air pass through them. **Evidently therefore, the vital airs are not in the Pranamayakosa. The Pranamayakosa is a sheath of Subtle Organs.**

## Section 19 TEGUMENTS OF SUBTLE BODY

We noted (p. 30 above) that a compact layer of Tanmatras forms a subtle tegument to the Subtle Body. **It is a permanent, compact, thin layer of Tanmatras around the Pranamayakosa**, the sheath of Subtle Organs. Though Tanmatras are everywhere in the Space, the above said compact layer remain distinct and firm, without ever a change in it. Its relation with the free Tanmatras in the Space may be like that of an earthen jar with the earth in the land; and its relation with the Subtle Body may be like that of the loose peel of a sweet orange with its globose pulp. The space in the Subtle Body, between the Pranamayakosa and the tegument, is of great importance as **the storehouse of Karmabhavas**, (See sect. 26 below). Wanting an apt name, we will refer to that space in the Subtle Body as the **INTERSPACE**. It is normally full of Karmabhavas.

The tegument of the Subtle Body bears little comparison with the skin of the material body. Both are coverings of the respective bodies; but the tegument is insensitive, and it does not serve as an organ; while the skin serves as a highly sensitive organ of touch. There is a Subtle Organ of touch in the Subtle Body; but it forms part of the Pranamayakosa; it is not a part of the tegument of the Subtle Body.

## Section 20 VIBRATIONS AND WAVES

Rhythmic pulsations in our system are called vibrations. Heart and lungs vibrate so visibly. All glands, vibrate internally to produce their secretions. In fact, vibrations are fundamental in our system. Embryologists say that at 20 days after fertilization of

ovum, the embryo contains a pair of vibrating tubes, which subsequently fuse together and twist to form the heart. The vibrations that were in the original tubes, continue in the heart throughout the life, to cause circulation and purification of blood. Respiration is carried on, right from birth, by vibrations of the lungs. Speech is made possible by vibrations in the vocal cords. Vibrations in the minute nerve fibres of the brain catch the sensations arriving from the organs and relay them to Intellect, and also receive impulses from the Mind and relay them to the organs. Vibrations in the Mind form thoughts, desires, and emotions. Different vibrations of Mind involve different thoughts, desires, or emotions. It is because thoughts occur as vibrations, thought waves spread out and are grasped by telepaths. Vibrations work our system.

Vibrations originated in Brahman when it inclined to become manifest and active (vide p. 17 above). Any emotion, desire, or thought would cause a disturbance in Consciousness; and that would reflect as vibrations. When Mind thinks, it vibrates; when Intellect decides it vibrates; when Brahman indulged in a thought it vibrated. As Brahman the potential of pure Consciousness thought of becoming manifest, it vibrated. It vibrated throughout. Those vibrations never stopped. When its potential became manifest the vibrations inhered in its manifestations and the vibrations became active vibrations of power. In the manifestations of Brahman, the Saguna-brahman and Primal Nature, also the vibrations were throughout, in infinite units, each unit being an eternal spring of the Power of Consciousness. All vibrations generate spreading waves around them. It was the spreading waves that kept the units of vibration separate from one another. As waves from one unit of vibration spread out, they hit the other neighboring units; and, as numerous spreading waves hit a unit from all directions, their collective effect caused the unit to spin or rotate. As the process was continuous the rotations gained speed quickly. Speedily rotating vibrations are called whirling waves. Thus the original vibrations of power in Brahman became whirling waves of power. Vibrations, whirling waves and spreading waves are everywhere in the universe. They are in every being. They are in every particle that goes to compose atoms.

**Subtle waves can carry different contents**. When we talk on phone, the electric waves on the telephone wire carry reflections of our speech, to the receiver at the other end. Waves may also pass their contents to other waves even of a different kind. We have observed above that whirling waves impart their contents to spreading waves. When we talk on a phone from India to a brother at Chicago our speech is first carried by electric waves on the telephone wire to the international transmitter at Bombay, and then the electric waves pass the speech to radio waves emanating from the transmitter, to be taken to New York; when they reach New York the radio waves pass the speech to electric waves on the telephone wire leading to Chicago; when they reach the brother's phone the speech is passed on to sound waves in the air which carry it to the brother's ear; at his ear the speech is passed to waves in his auditory nerve; and so on. Though the speech is thus passed from waves to waves of different kinds, it reaches the brother's Intellect correctly without any diminutions or distortion in words or tunes. The above said waves carry, and pass, the speech so efficiently that the brother there feels to hear the speech from someone sitting close by. Likewise at our brain, sensations borne by subtle waves are passed to Subtle Waves (see p. 41 below), and conversely impulses borne by Subtler Waves are passed to subtler waves, without any change in them.

Soul is vital principle of Consciousness; and its powers reflect in the Karanas. The whirling waves of the sensitive Karanas carry different aspects of Consciousness. The

whirling waves of Intellect carry Consciousness which relates to specific objects or facts; they make Intellect capable of forming decisions and issuing directions. The whirling waves of Ego carry self-asserting Consciousness; Ego always urges self-interests. The whirling waves of Mind carry Consciousness of pleasures. Mind seeks pleasures. And so on. The whirling waves carry different contents, and form different subtle elements as have been detailed above. As transformation after transformation proceeded in Nature, the speed of rotations of the whirling waves and the sensitivity of elements go reduced. Intellect was highly sensitive; it could visualize even things which it had never perceived before. But Ego and Mind could visualize only things that had been once perceived before. Subtle Organs were only semi-sensitive, lacking volition and discretion which earlier elements had. They were semi-sensitive because the speed of rotations of their whirling waves was much less than that of the earlier elements which were sensitive. Sensitivity depends on subtlety; and subtlety depends on the speed of rotation of the constituent whirling waves. Tanmatras, the last of the series, were insensitive; that is to say, they were not subtle enough to be sensitive. The whirling waves which compose sensitive elements rotate so speedily that they normally repel actual contact of other whirling waves; so they never combined with another element. But, the speed of rotations of the whirling waves that composed the Tanmatras was so moderate that they could contact, penetrate, and coalesce with other similar waves. When the whirling waves of one Tanmatra were penetrated by the whirling waves of Tanmatras of other varieties, and they reacted mutually and united together, they formed new elements. In such combinations the combiners lost their subtlety and became dense, and therefore the product of their combinations became fine particles of matter. Scientists say that, even in hard solids, (stationary) whirling waves persist in their sub atoms. All electrons and the like are detected to exhibit the nature of whirling waves in them.

## Section 21 **PERCEPTIONS**

Perception is the acquisition of knowledge through the senses of sight, hearing, smell, touch, or taste. It occurs by transmission of vibrations and waves. Vibrations that move onwards are waves. Perceptions are carried to Intellect and Soul by waves: Swami Vivekananda (in his Complete Works, Vol. 1, p. 394) as observed,

"Perception occurs by the transmission of the vibrations, which first come to the external sense-organs, from the external to the internal organs, from the internal organs to the mind, from the mind to the Buddhi, from the Buddhi or Intellect to…the Atman."

Here, 'internal organs' denote the Subtle Organs; and 'Atman' is the Soul.

We may try to understand the import of the above said succinct observation, with reference to a particular perception, say, the vision of some red corals on a disc.

Science tells that light reaches us as electromagnetic waves (of wavelength less than 1/1300 of a millimeter). When the light waves fall on objects and reflect from them, they carry reflections of the forms, colors and lustres of those objects. The light waves, reflecting from the corals on the disc, carry with them reflections of the forms, colors and lustres of the corals and the disc. When some of those light waves strike the retina of an eye, they pass those reflections to the microscopic rods and cones of the retina; the rods and cons get excited with the reflections and vibrate vigorously. The

vibrations generate subtle waves in the connected nerve fibres in the retina and its continuation the optic nerve, and pass the reflections in them to those waves. The waves carry the reflexions, through the optic nerve, to the visual cortex of the brain. When the sensation of the reflections reach the cortex, the fine nerve fibres in the cortex get excited with the sensation and vibrate subtly, but vigorously. **The sensitive fine waves, arising from the vibrations in the cortex, are very much finer and subtler than the waves that came from the retina**. They are a different kind of waves that can travel in space, that is to say, through matterless media like Tanmatras in the space, while the subtle waves from the retina travel only through solid media like the nerve fibres. Wanting an apt name, we may refer to this new kind of extra fine waves as **SUBTLER WAVES**. They also are capable of carrying subtle contents, as the radio waves do. We know that speeches reaching the transmitting station through electric waves on the telephone wire, are further transmitted by radio waves that travel in space, to reach the receiving stations away in the country. Likewise, reflections of perceptions reaching the brain through subtle waves in nerves are further transmitted to the Subtler Waves that travel in space to reach the Subtle Body. The Subtle Waves are too subtle to be obstructed by any part of the material body. Only Subtler Waves can reflect their contents on the matterless Organs of the Subtle Body; and conversely, all waves emanating from Organs of the Subtle Body are also Subtler Waves. The Subtler Waves that emanate from the visual cortex carry exact reflections of the forms, colors, and lustres of the corals on the disc, to the Subtle Body. In doing so the Subtler Waves pass through the tegument of Tanmatras, and the Interspace and hit the Pranamayakosa. The Subtle eye in the Pranamayakosa receives the reflections brought by the Subtler Waves, gets excited with those reflexions, and vibrates vigorously. These vibrations in the Subtle eye correspond to the original vibrations in the rods and cones of the physical eye, and have the same reflexions as their contents. They are therefore described as **parallel actions** in the Subtle eye, that is to say, actions in the Subtle eye parallel to actions in the physical eye. The vibrations in the Subtle eye pass the reflexions to the Manomayakosa or Mind and from the Mind they pass to Intellect. Intellect cognizes the reflexions, and determines the identify of the objects reflected in them as red corals on a disc. When Intellect cognizes the perception, the Soul also experiences the vision. It is thus that a person experiences visions of objects. What Intellect cognizes and Soul experiences as a vision, is only the reflections of objects brought to the Subtle Body by the Subtler Waves, and not the objects as such (namely, the corals on the disc). The entire process, from the entry of light waves into the physical eye, to the cognition of that perception by the Soul, takes place in a split second, say, in about one-hundredth of a second, or even less time. Practically the cognition of the vision by the Soul is simultaneous with the arrival of the reflexion of the object in the physical eye.

Like the perception of vision, the other perceptions, and also the actions and the experiences of physical organs, are all transmitted in the same way, by subtle waves from the organs to the brain, and by Subtler Waves from the brain to the Intellect, and the Soul cognizes them. The reflexions that the subtle waves and Subtler Waves carry are true-to-original of the perceptions, actions, and experiences, concerned. Thus, in the case of a karma the reflexion that the waves carry would contain all features of the karma, such as the desire behind, acts done, emotions felt, goal aimed, pleasures and pains experienced, etc.

## Section 22 **IMPULSES**

Reverse to the process of perception of sensations is the process of issuance of impulses for actions. They originate in the Intellect, and are transmitted by waves to the relevant physical organs, which fulfill the impulses. The process may be detailed thus:

If on seeing the beautiful red corals, Mind vibrates with joy, and the vibrations swell into a desire to possess the corals, the excitement in Mind will pass to Intellect. If Intellect approves the desire, it will determine the action to be taken thereon. The considerations and decisions of Intellect occur as vibrations in it. When a decision is reached, the vibrations that contain the decision spread to the Mind. Then the Mind vibrates in excitement and elaborates the actions needed to fulfill the decision. If Intellect's decision is to ascertain the price of those corals, Mind's vibrations will be to formulate a query to be conveyed to the organ of speech to address the salesman. All these vibrations and formulation occur because of the powers of Consciousness that reflects in Intellect and Mind. Mind's vibrations then spread to the Pranamayakosa as impulses carrying the query. The Subtle Organ of speech in Pranamayakosa responds to them, gets excited with the impulses, and heaves vigorously to articulate the query. It gives rise to Subtler Waves which carry the impulses from the Subtle Organ to the brain. When the Subtler Waves hit the brain, it relays the impulses, through subtle waves in motor nerves, to the larynx in the throat. That is to say, a motor cortex in the brain responds to the Subtler Waves carrying the above said impulses, and the fine nerve fibres in that cortex receive and become excited with the impulses and begin to vibrate actively. While the nerve fibres begin to vibrate the hundreds of mitochondria in the cell-bodies of the nerve-fibres generate electricity (about 1/100,000 of a volt by each). As numerous cells release electricity the vibrations swell, and energetic waves carrying the impulses flow from the cortex, through the motor nerve fibres, to the muscle fibres of the larynx. The muscle fibres expand and contract, twist and relax, briskly to push air onto the vocal cords and vibrate them to cause sound waves that carry the query to the ears of the salesman. Thus the actions in the physical organ, the vocal cords, originated as vibrations in the Intellect and Mind, and were conveyed by Subtler Waves and subtle waves. As in the case of perceptions, the entire process mentioned above takes place in a split second. The transmission of impulses from Mind to larynx is practically instantaneous, though it has to pass through a Subtle Organ, Tanmatras, brain, and nerves. Sankhya philosophers would say, the Subtle Organ of Speech makes a subtle articulation of the query formulated by mind, and that articulation of the Subtle Organ reflects in the corresponding physical organ and causes a parallel physical action simultaneously, which the concerned salesman can hear.

## Section 23 **DREAMS**

The processes detailed in the preceding two sections are as they are conceived to occur in the wakeful state when both the material body and the Subtle Body are active. In the dream state, the material body remains lethargic, and the Subtle Body alone is active. Because of the lethargy in the material body, Subtler Waves from the Subtle Body normally do not excite vigorous reactions in the brain, to cause energetic impulses from its cortices. In other words, **normal actions in Subtle Organs during a dream do not evoke effective parallel actions in the corresponding physical organs.** The dreamer may mumble indistinct utterances, or his eyeballs may roll under the eyelids; but neither the speech, nor the look, becomes an effective action. Exceptions to this may occur when the action in a Subtle Organ at a dream is of acute intensity, like a frantic cry. The Subtler Wages emanating from the Subtle Body will be forceful enough to

excite intense reactions in the lethargic brain, and compel it to cause a parallel frantic cry through the physical organ of speech simultaneously. In somnambulism, actions in Subtle Body occur much more strongly than in normal dreams.

If we watch a child sleeping in its cradle, we will find it smiling, sorrowing, moving its eyeballs to and fro under the eyelids, and at times opening its eyes and looking around keenly. It may appear that the child is in a dream, seeing something interesting, or looking for somebody anxiously. But when its mother, assuming that the child is looking for her, stoops into the cradle, waves her head and makes sounds to attract its attention, the child may quietly close its eyes and resume sleep. It will then be obvious that the child's eyes, though open and apparently looking around, did not catch sight of the mother so close before them. Evidently the keen look of the child was not a look of the normal kind; it was only the reflex of a look, the external reflexion of a look occurring in the interior of the child. That interior organ can only be the eye of its Subtle Body. An intense look by its Subtle eye caused a clear reflex in its physical eyes, and made them move in parallel with the moves of the Subtle eye. The smiling and sorrowing made by the child in dream were also reflexes of similar actions happening in the Subtle Body. They were obvious instances of Subtler Waves emanating from the Subtle Organs causing parallel actions simultaneously in the corresponding physical organs.

Dream visions are said to be visions of our past actions and experiences, mostly of past lives. They show that the former Subtler Waves that carried reflexions of our actions to the Subtle Body did not die, but survive there, and they cause re-experiences of the past actions as dream visions. Dreamers often see persons, places, and events which they have not seen, heard, or even imagined, ever before in the present life. They are perceived as clearly as things are seen or heard in the wakeful state. They cannot be imaginations of Mind, because that would involve mental construction of the vision or talk, which requires a mental effort. But, dream visions never involve any the least mental effort. Often, the dreamer talks, or cries, in the dream; and they are heard by persons nearby, who feel that the talks or cries come forth from his physical body. We know for certain that the talks or cries in dreams are not voluntary actions of the physical body. They are happening in the Subtle Body causing parallel actions in the lethargic physical body. Bhagavatham (4:20:65) points out that Mind has no power to flash anything that had not been once experienced before, and therefore **the dream visions of unseen unheard inexperienced things, are visions of things experienced in a prior life**. Our normal experiences of memory of past actions of the present life show that lasting impressions of past actions do exist within us. Indication is that the Subtler Waves carrying reflexions of our past actions survive in our Subtle Body, and that when Mind reviews them during a sleep those re-views flash as dreams. How the reflexions of past actions and experiences are preserved in our system, and with what effect, may be examined in some detail in the next Part.

PART TWO

# BONDAGE TO KARMA

Section 24

## KARMA

Karma, in Sanskrit, means an action or work. It is a word of wide import. **Anything done 'with the body, mind, or speech' is a karma**. Cultivating, nursing, hunting, etc. are karmas done with the body. Desiring, planning, meditating etc. are karmas done with the mind. Teaching, singing, praising, etc. are karmas done through speech. Actions like seeing, hearing, breathing, sleeping, etc. are also karmas.

Life is a continuous series of karmas. No person ever remains for a moment without doing some karma or other, with his body, or mind, or speech. If he is awake and not doing any act with the material body, he will be doing something with the mind.

**A karma may involve a merit, or a demerit, or both**. A karma that benefits others, and a Godward karma (like meditation), are said to involve merit. An act of harm to someone involves demerit. Acts like breathing or sleeping, may not involve a merit or demerit. Demerits may be reckoned as negative merits; and in that view, **the term 'merits' may be used as a generic sense to mean both merits and demerits collectively**. Goodness or badness of karma constitutes its merits. It is said that, besides the results that follow the performance of a karma, its merits also bring forth their own consequences to the doer, at a later time.

## Section 25 **CONSEQUENCES**

The benefits or calamities that arise as a result of doing karma, are said to be the consequences of the karma. Such consequences may arise to be experienced by the doer immediately, or long after performance of the karma. In this context, performance of karma is one thing, the merits of the karma is another. **The consequences that directly follow the performance of karma are called its immediate consequence. They are the direct results of the performance of the karma. Besides them, the merits of the karma also are said to yield their own consequences to the doer**. They are the rewards for the merits, or penalties for the demerits involved in the karma. **Normally, the merits or a karma take time to yield their consequences**. Only in rare cases of extraordinary merit, or atrocious demerit, do such consequences arise in the current life; in normal cases they arise only in the next life or in a later life. Whey they are so delayed will be explained in sect. 32 below. Here, we note that the consequences that arise later as the outcome of the merits of a karma are also consequences of the karma. As they arise, for the experiencing of the doer, only long after performance of the karma, they are called the **ultimate consequences of the karma**.

The consequences of a karma are mentioned also as the result or the fruits of the karma. Though the terms, results and fruits, are applicable to both the immediate and ultimate consequences of a karma, **generally, the immediate consequences are referred to as its results, and only the ultimate consequences as its fruits**. Scriptures are unanimous to tell that the fruits of a meritorious karma are sweet benefits, and the fruits of an evil karma are bitter calamities. (See, yogasutras 2:13,14). Health, wealth, luck, position in society, happy relations, pleasant environments, etc. are said to be fruits of merits; and adversity, poverty, disease, misfortunes, unhappy relations, unpleasant environments, etc. are said to be fruits of demerits of past karmas.

The doer shall experience the fruits of his karma, that is to say, everyone must enjoy the pleasures, and suffer the calamities, that arise as the fruits of his karmas. Parabrahmopanishad (1) says, "Like a farmer, the doer experiences the fruits." (Karmakarah karshakavat phalam anubhavthi). Paimgalopanishad (2:5) says, the doer himself must consume the fruits of karmas. This liability to experience the fruits or ultimate consequences of one's karmas or works, is called the **"bondage to karma"**.

The above proposition is not peculiar to the Indian philosophy. Bible says,
"The Lord…gives every man according to his ways and according to the fruits of his doings" (Jer 17:10; Rom 2:6). What the Lord gives, no man can refuse or evade. What the Lord gives as the fruits of doings is His judgment on our doings; it is sure to be given, though it may take some time. Bible states it strongly, as it says "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." (Gal 6:7). It is imperative that he shall reap the fruits of his acts. In the context here, the expression 'he shall reap' means that he shall consume (the fruits). There is no question of their avoidance or failure. There will always be an interval between the sowing and the reaping. Philokalia (Vol. 1 p 118) observes,
"Because an interval of time elapses between sowing and reaping, we begin to think there will be no requital." It is a vain thinking. Who soweth shall also reap. The doer has to take the fruits of his actions as and when they ripen.

If the fruits of all karmas have to be experienced by the doer, and they take time to ripen for experiencing, **it becomes necessary to preserve the karmas intact till they yield their ultimate fruits**. If performance of a karma is regarded as sowing, the experiencing of fruits of the karma is the reaping. It takes time for the reaping. After the sowing is over, that is to say, after the performance of the karma is over, the karma has to exist intact till it yields its ultimate fruits. Indian philosophy conceives that all past karmas, with their merits and demerits intact, exist as Karmabhavas in the doer's Subtle Body, for an indefinite period; and that later remembrances of past acts are caused by such Karmabhavas.

## Section 26 **KARMABHAVAS**

When we try to remember a past karma done a few years ago, the whole karma arises in our mental vision. It shows that the past actions do subsist in some form somewhere in our system.

We observed (p 41 above) that Subtler Waves carry exact reflexions of every action of ours to the Subtle Body, and that causes cognition of the action or karma by the Self. The reflexions carried by them contain all the features of the karma, which include the mode of performance, and the physical actions, intentions, emotions, etc. involved in it. So those reflexions amount to a virtual existence of the karma itself, in those Subtler Waves. The Subtler Waves reaching a Subtle Body and the reflections in them do not die out, but survive indefinitely. The actions, intentions, and emotions in a karma involve the goodness or badness of the karma, the merits of the karma. As the Subtler Waves carry complete reflexions of the actions intentions and emotions in the karma, they are said to carry the merits of the karma also. In other words, **the merits of a karma abide in the Subtler Waves that carry the karma to the Subtle Body. The Subtler Waves penetrate the Subtle Body and cause cognition of the karma by the Intellect and Soul. As the Subtler Waves come to contact the Soul's whirling**

**waves their high-speed whirling motion causes the Subtler Waves also to whirl fast. The whirling Subtler Waves stay in the Interspace of the Subtler Body and subsist there**. In so subsisting, all the fine whirling waves, related to one karma or action, gather together as one unit. Such a **unitary cluster of whirling waves bearing true and complete reflexions of a past krma is called the "Karmabhava" of that karma**. In Sanskrit, 'bhava' means existence; so, etymologically 'Karmabhava' means the existence of a karma. It is the mysterious continuance of a past karma with its merits, in the Subtle Body.

Philosophers have given different names to the Karmabhava. Some mention it simply as **Karma**, for short. Others call it **Samskara** (vide Paimgalopanishad 2:6; Yogasutras 3:18). In Sanskrit, 'Samskara' generally means refinement. Sometimes the Vedas mention the source of or the product, or vice versa, as a figure of speech. For example, Rig Veda (9:46:4) says "Mix soma with the cow" – here 'some' signifies the juice of the herb soma, and 'cow' signifies its milk; source is mentioned to denote the product. The refinement, positive or negative, of a person is the external reflection of the totality of active Karmabhavas in him (see p 49 below); so the Karmabhavas are source of refinement; therefore they are figuratively called Samskaras. Certain other philosophers name Karmabhava as **Vasana** (vide, Annapoorna Upanishad 4:52, 80, 88). In Sanskrit 'vasana' denotes natural inclination. Karmabhavas are the source of natural inclinations that arise in the life; so, they call Karmabhavas themselves as Vasanas.

Every physical work that has been concluded, every fervent thought that had subsided, and every intense prayer or speech made emotionally, continue their virtual existence as Karmabhavas in the Subtle Body. As karmas after karmas are being done, Karmabhavas crowd in the Interspace; but they make no fusion, or confusion, because every Karmabhava remains as a distinct and separate unit.

When the Subtler Waves of a Karmabhava strike the Pranamayakosa and impart the reflexions of action to a Subtle Organ in it, the Subtler Waves do not lose their contents. It is like a teacher imparting his information to a student; the student gets all the information that the teacher has on the subject, but the teacher does not thereby lose his information in the least; the information that he had continues intact in him. When Whirling Waves of Consciousness that is Soul impart or radiate Consciousness (Chaitanyam) to the organs constantly, the Soul (as the source of Consciousness) does not reduce or lose anything thereby. A torch that lights another torch does not reduce the least of its own flame. It is likewise with the Subtle Waves of Karmabhavas also. When they impart the reflexions in them, they do not lose those reflexions, but continue to have them intact, so that whenever they rise again at a later time to cause a memory of the past action, they are able to present the past action, with all its features intact, clearly and completely, to the Mind through the Subtle Organs. In that process, the fine whirling Subtler Waves rise up from their subsidence, well into full-fledged Subtler Waves, hit the Pranamayakosa and impart the reflexions of the past action or experience to the relevant Subtle Organ, which transmits them to the Mind. Then the Mind transmits them to Intellect, and when it cognizes the reflexions, it and the Soul re-experience the original action in all its details. We call that experience a **memory** if it occurs in the wakeful state, or a **dream** if it occurs in a sleep. **Knowledge** exists in collections of Karmabhavas of works like reading, seeing, hearing, experimenting, testing etc., and manifests as memories of their contents.

Yogasutras (3:18) says that a recollection of past life (wherever it occurs) is a re-view of the related Karmabhavas (See Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda Vol. 1 p 276.) The researches of Dr. Ian Stevenson (vide sect. 2 above) disclosed that memories in certain persons continue unaffected by physical death and reincarnation even after some years. **The continuance of memory shows continuance of Karmabhavas, with their contents intact. Karmabhavas last indefinitely; they never perish**.

Scientists say, they have detected galaxies 6000 million light-years away from the Earth. It signifies that they had detected light waves that had been traveling in Space for 6000 million years to reach Earth. If the subtle light waves can subsist that long in the matterless Space between the stars and the Earth, it is understandable that the Subtler Waves, which are much subtler than the light waves, may also subsist indefinitely long in the matterless Interspace of the Subtle Body.

A Karmabhava, bearing a merit or demerit, will blossom, one day or other, to deliver the fruits of the merit or demerit in it. **It delivers the fruits by inspiring a present action which will yield the fruits of the past karma, as its immediate or direct result**.

Krmabhavas are said to remain active or dormant. Activity of Karmabhava is projection of inspirations to the Mind. **If a Karmabhava remains without such activity, it is said to be dormant; if it projects an influence or inspiration to the Mind, it is said to be active**. Karmabhavas generally remain dormant, until they rise to yield fruits of the past acts which they represent.

Indian philosophy conceives that, before commencement of life, a large set of Karmabhavas rise together to guide the course of that life, and that every one of them remains subtly active throughout, till it gets its chance to yield the fruits of action, which is its role. As each karmabhava remains active, it constantly exerts a mild influence on the Mind, which influence depends on the nature of the past act that reflects in it. **It is the collective effect of such mild influence of all the Karmabhavas remaining active that manifests as a person's character, talents, outlooks, inclinations, aptitudes, and general disposition**. Active Karmabhavas which contain reflexions of meritorious acts and pleasant experiences, will cause pleasant disposition; active Karmabhavas which contain reflexions of evil acts and miserable experiences, will cause a miserable disposition. Hence, the refinement, or its negative, the rudeness, in a person's character is the reflection of the general effect of the active Karmabhavas in his Subtle Body. It is in view of this feature (of being the cause of refinement in a person) that Karmabhavas are called "Samskaras".

"The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda" contains many observations about Karmabhavas, under the name Samskaras. As they are so illuminative, I cite a few of them here. It may be noted that in these passages, as in many other contexts, Swami Vivekananda has used the name 'Mind' to denote the Subtle Body. He has said,
"Each man consists of three parts – the body, the internal organ or the mind and behind that, what is called Atman, the self. The body is the external coating, and mind is the internal coating, of the Atman…" (ibid, vol. 2 p 254)
What is beside the Soul and the external coating of the physical body in a man, is "the internal coating" of the Subtle Body, and that is what is mentioned in the above passage as "the mind".

Above Karmabhavas, he observed,
"Whatever work we do, the mind is thrown into a wave, and after the work is finished, we think the wave is gone. No. It has only become fine, but it is still there. When we try to remember the work, it comes up again and becomes a wave. So it was there; if not, there would not have been memory. Thus every action, every thought, good or bad, just goes down and becomes fine and is there stored up." (ibid, Vol. 1 page 243).

"Using the simile of a lake for the mind, every ripple, every wave that rises in the mind, when it subsides, does not die out entirely, but leaves a mark and a future possibility of that wave coming out again. This mark, with the possibility of the waves reappearing, is what is called Samskara. Every work that we do, every movement of the body, every thought that we think, leaves such an impression on the mind-stuff, and even when such impressions are not obvious on the surface, they re sufficiently strong to work beneath the surface subconsciously. What we are every moment is determined by the sum total of these impressions on the mind. What I am just at this moment is the effect of the sum total of all the impressions of my past life. This is really what is meant by character; each man's character is determined by the sum total of these impressions (ibid, Vol. 1 page 54).

"Each experience that we have, comes in the form of a wave in the Chitta, and this subsides and becomes finer and finer, but is never lost. It remains there in minute form, and if we can bring this wave up again, it becomes memory". (ibid vol.1 p 276) ('Chitta' is only another name for mind).

"The mindstuff is the great storehouse, the support of all past desires reduced to Samskara form". (ibid, vol. 1 page 297).

It may be noted that these four citations refer to Karmabhavas of works, thoughts, experiences, and desires, respectively.

## Section 27 **FRUITION OF KARMA**

The main function of a Karmabhava is to yield the fruits of the past karma it comprises. They are the consequences of the merits and demerits of the karma. A reward follows every merit, and a penalty follows every demerit of a karma. We noted that the merits and demerits of a karma abide in its Karmabhava. As they stay in the Subtle Body of the doer, he cannot avoid their consequences. In the Interspace they may remain dormant for a time that depends on their intensity; but they are sure to rise, one day or other, to yield their fruits, and the doer has to experience the fruits as they arise. When the time arrives, the fine whirling waves that constitute the Karmabhava, will swell up, with the aspects of merit and demerit in prominence. **The Karmabhava is then said to be in bloom**. It is really the merit and demerit in the Karmabhava that are in bloom; but we say generally that the Karmabhava is in bloom. When the spreading waves emanating from the swelled Subtler Waves reach Mind and Intellect, and interact with their vibrations, **an inspiration arises in the Mind or Intellect for a particular action or work. The results that follow the performance of that work are the ultimate consequences or fruits of the past act involved in the Karmabhava**. As the work is caused by the Karmabhava of the past karma or act, its results (immediate consequences) re said to be the ultimate fruits of the past karma. **As the said**

**inspirations arise in the Subtle Body itself, their influences on Mind and Intellect are said to be inviolable**. Bhagavad Gita (18:60) says:
"You, who are bound by the karma born of your own Karmabhava, even if you do not wish to do that karma, will have to do it under constraint."
The 'karma born of a Karmabhava' is the act or work that arises under inspiration of the Karmabhava. Even if a person is unwilling to do that act, the Gita says, his circumstances will so shape that he will be constrained to do that act. The results, or immediate consequences, of the act done under inspiration of a Karmabhava, are the fruits, or ultimate consequences, of the past act which virtually continues in the Karmabhava. Normally the bloom of a Karmabhava and its inspirations will last, until the act inspired by them has been accomplished. Conversely, it may be said, **every inclination for action that naturally arises in a person, proceeds from an antecedent Karmabhava**. (Cf. sect. 31 below).

The fruition of Karmabhavas may be, not in the order of their origin, but in the order of their vigour. 'First come first served' is not a rule of Nature. In plants, we often find vigorous buds in a tender twig developing to bloom early, while many old buds remain dormant in the order twigs and the stem. It is a way of Nature to prefer vigour to seniority in age. Vigour of a Karmabhava is the vigour or intensity of the merits and demerits in it.

In most cases of bilateral acts (like marriages) there will be mutually responding Karmabhvas in either, so that the waves of inspiration proceeding from one will incite the corresponding Krmabhava in the other also to bloom and co-operate to accomplish the bilateral act. The so called 'love at first sight' the mutual attraction between two youths, felt even at their first meeting, may be the interaction of waves from the corresponding Karmabhavas in them.

## Section 28 RISE OF KARMABHAVAS

Karmabhavas may arise in more ways than one. The rise of Karmabhavas from **bodily actions** has been explained above. Karmas done with Mind, and Karmas done with speech, also produce their Karmabhavas.

**Desiring** is an action of the Mind. When Mind desires, it vibrates with vigour proportionate to the intensity of the desire. Subtler Waves arising from those vibrations carry reflections of the desire and the emotions that accompany it. They spread to Intellect to induce action to fructify the desire. Even if they do not succeed, those Subtler Waves will subside as the whirling waves in the Interspace of the Subtle Body, and form a Karmabhava.

**Prayer** is an act done with speech. A heartfelt prayer with an unrestrainedly burst of tears, is said to produce a virile Karmabhava. When the Mind vibrates vigorously with intense emotion, Subtler Waves, carrying reflexions of that prayer and its emotions, arise; and when they subside in the form of minute whirling waves in the Interspace, they form a Karmabhava.

If even in the subsided fine state, the Subtler Waves, carrying intense emotions, do not calm down and become dormant, but continue in vigour, they may not have to wait

long to bloom and ripen, to fulfill the desire or the prayer concerned. (See sec. 32 below).

Originally, when a fragment of Sagunabrahman acquired a Subtle Body and entered a material body form to constitute a live being, then that being must have been free of any Karmabhava. But, as the being began to perceive other objects casually, through its physical sensory organs, it began to have desires and do acts, and they gave rise to Karmabhavas in him. Even in later lives, **casual sense-perceptions continue to cause desires and actions**, though they may be controllable by a firm Intellect. Many or most of our present sense-perceptions may be maneuvers of Karmabhavas, but occasionally casual sense-perceptions also occur and cause desires. However that be, any desire or action that involves a merit or demerit, will give rise to an enduring Karmabhava.

An act inspired by a Karmabhava may produce another fresh Karmabhava. The inspiration of a Karmabhava may be to achieve a particular result; but the manner of achieving it, the actual performance of the relevant act, may be left to be guided by the modes of nature and the actual disposition of the person. Indian sages say that the actual disposition of a person at any time may be influenced by the resultant effect of the modes of Nature (Gunas) working in him at the time (cf. p 21 above). The modes of Nature will never be in equilibrium. One of the three modes will always dominate the other two; and the dominant mode may not be the same always. In a very pious man the dominant mode will be piety or Satvaguna; but when he gets angry the mode of Nature dominant in him will be Tamas. Man's actions are always influenced by the State of the modes of Nature in him at the time he does the act. Thus, when the inspiration of Karmabhava in a man is for uniting with a particular woman, Satvaguna may induce him to seek her consent for a pleasant marriage; Rajoguna may urge him to pay her parents to marry her to him; and Tamoguna may prompt him to abduct the woman by capture or treachery. Each act has its merit or demerit. In so far as the manner of accomplishment of the inspiration is not induced by the Karmabhava, it is a new act; and it generates a fresh Karmabhava that bears its merits. Like seed and plant, acts produce Karmabhavas and Karmabhavas cause acts – the series may go on endless.

## Section 29 **SAMCHITAKARMA**

We have noted (p. 45 above) that in the law of Nature, every person is bound to experience the fruits of his karmas. All fruits of karmas proceed from Karmabhavas. It is the merits and demerits of a karma involved in Karmabhavas that yield the fruits of that karma. All Karmabhavas abide in the Subtle Body; and no Karmabhava declines before delivering the fruits of the karma involved in it.

Normally, the time taken for the actual experiencing of the fruits of a karma, is much longer than the time taken to perform the karma. In the secular law, for a crime that is done in a few minutes, the offender may, later on suffer punishment for years. In nature, for nurturing a sapling for some months, the planter may, later on, enjoy its fruits for decades. Scriptures declare that for a meritorious act, the doer will enjoy heavenly pleasures for long years, and for a wicked act the doer may suffer hellish miseries for many years. Consensus appears to be that the time taken to experience the fruits of a karma is far longer than the time taken to do the karma.

Life is a continuous series of karmas. Each karma generates its own Karmabhava, which yield its fruits to the doer. Karmabhavas ripen, one by one, to yield fruits. If experiencing the fruits of a karma takes more time than doing of that karma, the fruits of all karmas done in a life cannot be exhausted in a life; it would require a much longer time than one life to experience them. **So, at the end of every life, a good number of Karmabhavas would fall in arrears in the Subtle Body**. Hence, the number of Karmabhavas in the Subtle Body increases in every life. Some of the Karmabhavas in the Subtle Body of a person may be in the course of development to attain bloom; they may be active, and waiting for their time to yield fruits in the current life. But, most of the Karmabhavas in a Subtle Body are in a dormant state, without getting a stimulus to rise to yield fruits. **The aggregate of past Karmabhavas remaining dormant in a Subtle Body is called Samchitakarma**. In Sanskrit 'Samchita' means accumulated, or collected; and 'karma' is a short for Karmabhava. 'Samchitakarma' literally means accumulated Karmabhavas; but, the name is applied only to accumulated Karmabhavas of prior lives, which remain in a dormant state.

It is said that Samchitakarma procures stability to the Subtle Body; because, as long as any Karmabhavas continue, the Subtle Body also has to continue intact as their storehouse. But, on one's attainment of perfect Spiritual Enlightenment, the entire Samchitakarma will vanish, as dreams do on the awakening (vide Adhyatma Upanishad – 50). The same Upanishad (53) distinguishes that (the active) Karmabhavas which have commenced development (to bloom) before the rise of spiritual Enlightenment, will not perish, without delivering their fruits, just as an arrow that has commenced flight to a mark will not stop midway.

## Section 30 **REINCARNATIONS**

Fruits of a karma can be experienced only through a material body. Since every person is bound to experience the fruits of all his karmas, and a big number of them remain unexhausted at the end of a life, it becomes necessary for him to take another life to consume the remaining fruits of karmas. Indian philosophy conceives that the Soul departs with its Subtle Body containing the Karmabhavas, and takes **reincarnation to experience the unconsumed fruits of karmas**. It is a logical conclusion based on the natural obligation of a person to experience the ultimate consequences of the merits of his actions. It is the basis of the concept of reincarnations in Indian philosophy.

In the new life, the old Karmabhavas bloom, one by one, and inspire actions that bring forth the fruits of actions in store. When the immediate consequences of an inspired action are experienced, the Karmabhava which inspired it, declines and recedes. But in the meanwhile fresh Karmabhava of that action arises in the Subtle Body. Casual sense-perceptions and casual thoughts cause desires and actions and they also give rise to Karmabhavas. Since the consumption of the fruits of a karma takes longer time than the doing of that karma, Indian sages say that normally the addition of fresh Karmabhavas in a life exceeds the exhaustion of old Karmabhavas. So much so the Samchitakarma is always on the increase. As it goes on increasing, life after life, the person takes further and further reincarnations to experience the accumulated arrears of fruits of karmas.

A reincarnation takes place well after formation of a fresh Prarabdhakarma from the Samchitakarma. (Sec sect. 31, 35 below). **Apart from rare exceptions, there will be**

**an interval between the formation of fresh Prarabdhakarma and the reincarnation** as the Soul takes its own time to fix a place suitable to experience the fresh Prarabdhakarma. When a disembodied Soul desires to take reincarnation, it roams about to fix the couple through whom it can attain a material body to experience the new Prarabdhakarma. That selection will invariably be influenced by the Asannakarma in bloom in the Subtle Body. (See sect. 36 below). Being matterless, the Soul can easily enter into any physical body. It enters the body of a chosen male and remains within a newly formed sperm in him (cf. Aitareya Upanishad 2:1, Mahanarayana Upanishad 1:1). Then it induces the male to deposit the sperm into the chosen female, so that through her it can attain the desired reincarnation.

If at the time of death, the person had a vigorous desire at heart, his reincarnation may be quick, even immediate, as in the cases of Maria Januaria of Brazil, and of William George of Alaska, investigated by Dr. Ian Stevenson. (Vide, Twenty Cases of Suggestive Of Reincarnation p. 183, 232). The evidence in those cases showed that those persons had fixed and predicted their choice of the place of reincarnation, even before their death.

Section 31 **PRARABDHAKARMA**

Karmabhavas of past lives remain the Subtle Body as two distinct groups – those that are dormant, and those that are active. Collectively the former are called Samchitakarma, and the latter are called Prarabdhakarma. Karmabhavas that have arisen in the present life remain as a separate third group (cf. sect. 32).

According to Indian philosophers, **nothing ever happens without a cause**. (Yogasikha Upanishad 1:37). Every action of ours arises from an antecedent cause. The cause of an action or work may be a Karmabhava-in-bloom or a casual sense-perception. Many of our sense-perceptions may be at the instance of Karmabhavas in bloom, as part of the process of bringing about fruits of action. The other sense perceptions, which are not contrived by Karmabhavas, are the casual sense perceptions mentioned above. They may be rare exceptions, but their possibility cannot be ruled out. (see p. 50 above). Excepting them, we may say generally that actions or works that arise in a natural way are inspired by Karmabhavas. Swami Vivekananda has said,
"All our works now are the effect of past Samskaras; again these works, becoming Samskaras, will be the causes of future actions; and thus we go on". (Complete Works, Vol. 1 p. 245).

It signifies that apart from the rare exceptions, every work is caused by the Samskara (Karmabhava) of some prior work. Every work and resultant experience in life, fortune or misfortune, pleasure or pain, is caused by a prior actions subsisting in Karmabhavas in the Subtle Body.

Certain normal bodily behaviors, such as breathing, winking, sleeping, urinating, (baby's) suckling, etc. may not be regarded as works caused by any Karmabhavas; they may be caused by the behavioral propensities inhering in the genes in the body as part of the functional designs contained in them (See sect. 44 (i) below).

Life is a continuous succession of karmas. We never sit for a moment without doing some karma or other, with the body, mind, or speech. If karmas are done at the

inspiration of Karmabhavas, there must be a very large number of active Karmabhavas to inspire all the krmas of a life; and also they must be set in a perfect order to inspire karma after karma, one by one, without a gap or confusion. How does it occur?

Indian sages say, **life is not lived in a casual way, Even before commencement of a life, a definite programme for the life is set in terms of Karmabhavas**; and that forms a blueprint, which unfolds, action by action, as life proceeds. To achieve it, well before commencement of a life a sufficiently large number of Karmabhavas in the Samchitakarma, rise from their dormancy, and begin to whirl or rotate a little more vigorously. As they are thus become active, they separate themselves from the rest of the Samchitakarma that continue in dormancy. **The separated Karmabhavas gather together as one group, to guide the forthcoming life**. In the forthcoming life, it is these active Karmabhavas that attain bloom, one by one, and inspire actions, and cause experiencing of fruits of actions. All of them are therefore on the way to bloom to cause effects in the coming life. Therefore these Karmabhavas are said to have in a way commenced activity to wards attainment of bloom. The actual attainment of bloom will be, one by one, in the course of the whole length of life; but these Karmabhavas will remain mildly active throughout, rotating suitably, until they attain bloom. Their rotations generate their own spreading waves which reach the Mind and Intellect and cause some mild effects on the Mind and Intellect, according to their own contents. **It is the aggregate of such mild effects that appear as the person's character, general disposition, talents and outlooks. It is also the effect of such active Karmabhavas that appear as inborn emotions, like personal affinity, love, innate aversions, and inherent fears. All of those Karmabhavas are therefore deemed to have commenced functioning, and their aggregate is called Prarabdhakarma**. In Sanskrit, 'Prarabdha' means well-begun; and 'karma' is a short for Karmabhavas. So, 'Prarabdhakarma' literally means commenced karmabhavas, signifying thereby a set of Karmabhavas that have begun to function.

It may be particularly noted that **only the Karmabhavas in the Prarabdhakarma will attain bloom**, one by one, and cause actions and experiences, **and thereby yield fruits of action**.

## Section 32 KARMABHAVAS OF CURRENT LIFE

Karmabhavas that arise in the current life do not right away join the Samchitakarma or the Prarabdhakarma. We observed that our actions in the prior lives crowd in the form of Karmabhavas in the Subtle Body, and that they exist in two groups as the Samchithakarma and the Prarabdhakarma. But apart from rare exceptions mentioned in Sect. 2 above, men generally do not remember anything about a prior life. It shows that the power of Intellect or Mind to stimulate past Karmabhavas to render memories, do not extend to any Karmabhava in the Samchithakarma or the Prarabdhakarma. But, we can recall memories of past actions of the current life. It shows that the **Karmabhavas of actions done in the present life remain separate from the other Karmabhavas**. It renders them available to Intellect and Mind, when they need them to cause memories, for shaping current actions in the light of past experiences in the life. These Karmabhavas may remain dormant, but when a call or stimulus arrives from the Mind or Intellect, they will rise to cause the required memory. When the contact with Mind or Intellect is over, they will retire again to dormancy.

Since Prarabdhakarma alone can yield fruits, and the **Karmabhavas of present life do not join the current Prarabdhakarma, these Karmabhavas do not normally bear fruit in the present life**. The puzzling anomaly of a highly benevolent man suffering untold miseries, or of a notorious villain enjoying prosperity, only shows that the experiences of the present life are not the consequences of acts done in this life, but are the ultimate consequences of unknown acts done in prior lives. **It is Karmabhavas of prior lives that constitute Prarabdhakarma for the current life**. The current Prarabdhakarma is a definite number of Karmabhavas that have set themselves to yield fruits of action in the current life. Its formation took place before termination of the previous life; and, therefore no addition or reduction takes place in it in the normal course. So it is that Karmabhavas of the current life do not occur in the current Prarabdhakarma, or yield fruits in the current life. But exceptions to this are not impossible.

A Karmabhava containing very high merit or demerit would be rotating very vigorously. Even when it becomes finer to subside in the Subtle Body, its whirling waves does not calm down, but continue in considerable vigour. That is why, in the demeanor of a person who had committed an atrocious crime, a reflection of turbulent emotion is often perceived. As the vigour of the Karmabhava persists, the Karmabhava does not go to dormancy, but moves slowly towards the Karmabhavas that remain active as the Prarabdhakarma, and eventually joins them. There also, because of its vigour, it may get to the forefront soon, attain bloom without long delay, and yield its fruits early. But, the exceptional introduction of a Karmabhava of present life to the current Prarabdhakarma may not be in the discretion of the Insentient Karmabhava itself. It may be only at the instance of the Power that controls the formation of every Prarabdhakarma and the order of blooming of its Karmabhavas. (See sect. 38 below).

Swami Vivekananda has referred to this exceptional phenomenon, thus:
"In exceptional cases when these Samskaras are very strong, they bear fruit quickly; exceptional acts of wickedness, or of goodness, bring their fruits even in this life". (Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol. 1 p 243).

When a gambler, who had killed a neighbor girl of fourteen years, to rob her jewels, by gagging a ball of thick clay into her mouth in spire of her entreaties, got into an unfinished well in the prison-compound a year later, and was chocked to death under a heavy landslide in the well, the people of the town ascribed the mishap as the fruit of his cruel act.

The Karmabhavas of the present life will end their dissociation with other Karmabhavas in the Subtle Body and will join them, at or after the end of the present life. We will be observing soon that, just before death, there will be a great stir in the Subtle Body when a large number of Karmabhavas rise from their dormancy in the Samchithakarma and gather together to form a new Prarabdhakarma for the next life (in reincarnation). In that stir, some of the Karmabhavas of the present life, will also join the formation of the new Prarabdhakarma. The rest of the Karmabhavas of the present life will join the Samchithakarma after a further interval that varies with individuals. If, before they join the Samchithakarma, reincarnation occurs the reborn child may have memory of incidents of its prior life. Such may be the cases of prior life memories investigated by Dr. Ian Stevenson as mentioned in sect. 2 above.

## Section 33 LENGTH OF LIFE

Indian sages hold that the natural length of life is related to the Prarabdhakarma in the Subtle Body. The patent purpose of a life is said to be experiencing of the fruits of Prarabdhakarma. Therefore, normally the lasts till Prarabdhakarma is exhausted. Conversely, when Prarabdhakarma is exhausted, the current life ends (Avadhuta Upanishad 19, Varahopanishad 2:71). As the natural purpose of life is conceived to be the consumption of fruits of Prarabdhakarma, when that purpose is over, the Soul retires from the current life, and leaves the material body assumed for the purpose. Bhagavad Gita (9:21) says, this is true of a life in heaven also, the purpose of which is to enjoy the pleasant fruits of karmas of superior merit. When that is over, that is to say, when the Prarabdhakarma set for the heavenly life is exhausted, the life in heaven terminates, and the Soul comes back to Earth for another reincarnation to experience the fruits of remaining Karmabhavas.

## Section 34 CONTINUITY

Prarabdhakarma comprises a huge number of active Karmabhavas, sufficient to inspire actions for a whole life. Though a young woman has about three lakh ovules in her ovaries, in a period only one of them develop into an ovum to become an embryo. Likewise, at a time one Karmabhava, out of the numerous in a Prarabdhakarma, blooms to inspire Intellect to an action which will bring about the fruit of a prior action. On such inspiration, Intellect will direct the Mind and the organs to carry out the inspired act. That act will culminate in an experience of pleasure or pain, according to the merits of the prior act which gave rise to the Karmabhava. The bloom of the Karmabhava will last till the experiencing of its fruits is completed. There will never be a confusion or cram among Karmabhavas in bloom. When the inspired act has been carried out, the Karmabhava begins to decline in vigour; and when the experiencing of the fruit is over, it recedes to the background; but it can cause a memory of the prior act even thereafter.

When a Karmabhava in bloom begins to decline in vigour, another Karmabhava from the Prarabdhakarma rise in bloom to inspire Intellect for another act which will bring about the next fruit of action. **Such a continuity of Karmabhavas in bloom goes on without ever a gap**. At times there may be more than one Karmabhava in bloom, each inspiring the intellect for a specific action or work; but there will never be a moment without a Karmabhava-in-bloom in the Subtle Body. So, there will never be a gap or break in inspirations on Intellect for action. The sequence of inspirations for action goes on incessantly, without a gap or vacancy at any time in the life.

After the last Karmabhava of a Prarabdhakarma must come the first Karmabhava of the next Prarabdhakarma. Since there shall never be a gap in the stream of Karmabhavas in bloom in the Subtle Body, and since only Karmabhavas of a Prarabdhakarma will attain bloom, it happens that before the bloom of the last Karmabhava of a Prarabdhakarma fades, the first Karmabhava of the next Prarabdhakarma will get ready to bloom and take the place of the former. Karmabhavas do not attain bloom by an explosion; they have to develop to bloom, and that may take some little time. Making allowance for such development, we may say that, to keep up continuity of Karmabhavas-in-bloom the next Prarabdhakarma must rise well before the bloom of the last Karmabhava of the current Prarabdhakarma fades out. When the last Karmabhava of the current

Prarabdhakarma fades out, the present life will end, and the Soul will leave the physical body. So we may re-state the above said proposition thus: Well before death, a fresh Prarabdhakarma rises in the Subtle Body, and before the death one of the Karmabhavas in it attains bloom.

The fresh Prarabdhakarma that arises at the end of the present life is naturally to concern the next life (in reincarnation). So, its first Karmabhava would concern the first act of the next life, namely the rebirth. Its inspiration will be to attain rebirth, in appropriate place, in a suitable body. Normally the bloom of a Karmabhava lasts till the act inspired by it is accomplished. So, the inspiration for rebirth that arises just before the death will continue till the rebirth takes place. In other words, the first Karmabhava of the next Prarabdhakarma, which attains bloom just before death, continues in bloom in the Subtle Body till the rebirth actually takes place (cf. Bhagavad Gita 8:6). Normally, in the interval between death and rebirth, no fresh inspiration or fresh action takes place. After rebirth, the successive blooming of Karmabhavas of the fresh Prarabdhakarma will go on.

## Section 35 **FRESH PRARABDHAKARMA**

We observed that the next Prarabdhakarma which concerns the next life arises, and one of its Karmabhavas attains bloom, before the end of the present life, before death occurs. As an external mark of such occurrence, **most of the dying persons exhibit an excitement, a kind of vivacity or mood-elevation, and a pleasant disengagement from their pains in the body**.

Prarabdhakarma comprises a large number of Karmabhavas. Yet is does not rise in parts, but the entire Prarabdhakarma arises as one lot. When the current Prarabdhakarma is on the verge of complete exhaustion, such of the Karmabhavas in the Samchitakarma as are to guide the forthcoming life, rise from dormancy, and become subtly active. They begin to rotate a little more vigorously. Soon they break off from the other Karmabhavas in the Samchitakarma which continue in dormancy. **Some of the Karmabhavas of the present life, which are to yield their fruits in the coming life, also rise likewise to join the new formations. All the separated Karmabhavas gather together briskly to form a compact group, which becomes the next Prarabdhakarma**. This rapid rise to activate of so many Karmabhavas from their dormancy, and their brisk assemblage as a lively unit to guide the new life to come, cause a stir, and a thrill so to say, in the Subtle Body. The prospect of entering a new life for fresh experiences, doubles that excitement. Mind, Intellect, and Soul, partake of this pleasant excitement. They begin to ignore the material body which they are about to abandon; and that causes the disengagement from the thitherto ailments in that body. And also, the prospect of entering a new life of fresh fortunes, causes a pleasant vivacity; and that accounts for the mood-elevation of most patients near death. The above two features are regarded as clear reflections of the excitement in the Subtle Body, at the ushering in of a new Prarabdhakarma before death.

## Section 36 **ASANNAKARMA**

In the preceding sections we noted that the last Karmabhava of the current Prarabdhakarma declines, and the first Karmabhava of the next Prarabdhakarma blooms before death in the present life. The Karmabhava-in-bloom at the time of Soul's

departure, is the first Karmabhava of the new Prarabdhakarma set for the next life. As the last Karmabhava of the Prarabdhakarma of the present life has lot its vigour, and in its place the first Karmabhava of the next Prarabdhakarma as attained bloom, it is the latter that inspires the thoughts and desires of the person at the moment of his death. Therefore **the first Karmabhava of the fresh Prarabdhakarma is called Asannakarma**. In Sanskrit, 'Asanna' means near death; and 'karma' is a short for Karmabhava. So, Asannakarma literally means the Karmabhava that functions at the time death is imminent. Buddhist texts define it as the Deathbed karma. As Asannakarma of the present life is a Karmabhava of the new Prarabdhakarma that concerns the next life in reincarnation, its inspiration relates to the first act or experience of the next life, namely the Soul's entry into a new body form, the kind of that body form, the environments for the new birth, etc. As the commencement of its functioning is close to the death of the physical body, the manifestation of its function in the current life is only as a thought or desire (and not as a physical act).

## Section 37 **FORM OF REINCARNATION**

Bhagavad-Gita (8:6) says,
"Remembering whatever form one leaves the body at the end that form itself one attains, having had always thought of that form (in the meanwhile)."
Narada Parivrajaka Upannishad (5:1:22) Yogasikha Upanishad (1:31) etc. also say that whatever being a person thinks of at the time of death, that he becomes on the rebirth.

Normally the bloom of a Karmabhava continues till its inspiration is fulfilled. Asannakarma, which concerns the reincarnation, continues in bloom till reincarnation is attained. That is to say, Asannakarma, which blooms before death in the present life, continues in bloom till the Soul enters a new body for the next life; however long the interval may be. Its inspiration influences Intellect, and through it the Soul also, till the rebirth takes place. Its influence, which arises at the time of death, continues up to the rebirth. In other words, the last thought or desire of a person at the time of death, which is the inspiration of Asannakarma, continues 'always' intact in the Intellect and Soul till reincarnation is accomplished. (It may be the reason why certain discarnate Souls turn violent in that state – cf. Mat 8:32). The form visualized in the last thought or desire also continues 'always' in Intellect and Mind till the reincarnation is accomplished. As the thought is, so will be the act. So the reincarnation will be in that form itself. Hence, the say in Bhagavad-Gita (8:6) that **the form which a person visualizes in his last thought at the time of death, is always remembered by him up to his rebirth, and it will be the form in which he will incarnate himself for the next life**. Bhagavatham (5:8) says that the pious King, Bharata, who breathed his last with thoughts about his pet fawn, was reborn as a deer. Maharshi Apantaratama, though spiritually enlightened, is said to have taken rebirth as Vedavyasa because at the time of his leaving the physical body he remembered his desire to compose the Vedas in a proper form. As a corollary it follows that one who remembers God, at the last moment of departure from the body, will attain God. (cf. Bhagavad-Gita 8:5).

## Section 38 **CONTROLLER OF KARMABHAVAS**

By now, we have noted several mysteries about the Karmabhavas. The question arises how they take place.

How are Karmabhavas formed? How re the spreading waves, that bring perceptions, actions, and experiences, to the cognition of Intellect, converted into whirling waves that subside so systematically in the Subtle Body?

When a Prarabdhakarma is about to be exhausted, a huge number of Karmabhavas, sufficient for a whole life, arise from dormancy simultaneously, to constitute a new Prarabdhakarma, in time to avoid a break in the flow of Inspirations to Intellect. The selection of Karmabhavas from the immense crowd in the Samchithakarma and from the Karmabhavas of the current life, is mysterious indeed! Who directs the selection?

Though the Karmabhavas in a Prarabdhakarma are countless and their blooming is not in the order of their origin, they bloom in perfect order, one by one, without any break, gap, confusion or cram. How systematic and harmonious are their workings! Who sets them in such order?

The Karmabhavas arising in the present life remain as a separate lot, distinct from those of prior lives, in order to offer memory of past experiences in the life. How do they secure such an independent accommodation despite the dense crowd of Karmabhavas in the small Interspace of the Subtle Body?

Though normally Karmabhavas yield fruits only in a later life, Karmabhavas of supreme merit, or shocking atrocity, are let to yield their fruits quickly in the current life itself. How are they enabled to deviate from the normal course, to fructify so quickly?

The Karmabhavas bring about the rewards or penalties appropriate for the acts done. Who decides the reward or penalty? Can the Karmabhavas themselves decide for themselves?

Do these processes happen so correctly at the volition of Karmabhavas, which are not sensible beings to make decisions. Fixing rewards and penalties involve judgment. Can the Karmabhavas themselves do it? Can the Karmabhavas themselves decide which of them are to form the next Prarabdhakarma? Reason seems to indicate that, in the complex nature of above said process, there must be some mysterious power that directs, guides, or controls, the processes of Karmabhavas. It may not be the Soul, or the Intellect, which is considered to suffer the bitter experiences furnished by some of the Karmabhavas. If the Soul or Intellect has the power to control, it can avoid the bitter Karmabhavas; but, we know neither of them can do it. So, **the power that controls the formation of Prarabdhakarma and the blooming of individual Karmabhavas, must be superior to the Soul**. Svetasvatara Upanishad (6:11), Brahmopanishad (14), etc. mention God as "Karmadhyaksha', which name signifies 'one who presides over the Karmabhavas'. Brahmasutras (3:2:38) and Brihadaranyaka Upananishad (4:4:24) describe God as the giver of fruits of actions. Bible also declares God to "give every man according to his ways and according to the fruits of his doings". (jer 17:10) Apostle Paul spoke of God "who will render to every man according to his deeds". (Rom 2:6). When God is said to give fruits of actions, it implies that He directs the fruition of Karmabhavas. That must be the way He inspires all beings to do their works in the life. (cf. Bhagavad-Gita 18:61) In short, the scriptures proclaim God as the Controller of Karmabhavas. In fact, the scriptures

declare God as the Controller, not only of Krmabhavas, but of the universe and all phenomena in it.

PART THREE

# THE GODHEAD

Section 39 **REVELATION**

Now let us turn to the Cosmic Soul that is Godhead.

We observed that an individual Soul is a tiny fragment of Godhead that became enwrapped by a Subtle Body (p 29 above). Godhead is generally mentioned as Sagunabrahman or Impersonal God. Though He is invisible, scriptures, philosophers, and scientists alike have said that **He is revealed in nature**, as the Souls is revealed in our activities.

"Making vision intelligent, find the universe filled with Godhead". (Tejobindu Upanishad 1:29). 'Intelligent vision' is thoughtful reflection on what is seen around, in the sky and in the world. Earnest reflections, like those describe din the following sections, reveal the all-pervading Godhead.

"May we worship, with sacred offerings, the God whose glory the snowy Himalayas, the oceans and the waters (rivers) and the regions in all directions, proclaim". (Rig Veda 10:121:3). Regions in all directions include regions up and around, i.e. sky and the world. So, this verse implies that nature everywhere proclaims the glory of God for our understanding Him.

"The seven heavens and the earth and all that is therein praise Him, and there is not a thing but hymneth His praise; but ye understand not their praise." (Quran 17:44).

"God is spiritual, and though He is invisible, He is clearly manifest in visible things, as the Soul is manifest in the body". (Philokalia Vol. 1 p. 337)

Philosopher Francois Voltaire (1694 – 1778) said,
"When we behold a fine machine we say there is a good machinist of excellent understanding. The world is an admirable machine. It reveals it Supreme Maker".

Philosopher J.J. Rousseau (1712 – 1976) said,
"I see it, or rather I feel it.... That God exists. He moves the universe, and he orders all things".

Nobel Scientist Albert Einstein (1879 – 1955) declared,
"I believe in God who reveals Himself in the harmony of what exists".
It signifies that the harmony, in the movements, works, and mutual relations, of all things that exist in the universe, reveals the existence and control of God Almighty.

Philokalia (Vol. 3 p 136-137) details that a contemplation of things in the sky and in the world – particularly, the sun, moon, stars, and, their movements and stability, the seasons, the clouds, rains, winds, and the countless varieties of animals and plants, and their form, colors, beauty, proportion, order, equilibrium, harmony, rhythm, usefulness, etc. – reveal the existence and care of God.

Section 40 **CELESTIAL BODIES**

The sky, which is the endless space around us, is studded with innumerable stars, planets, moons, asteroids, meteoroids, etc. If we look through a large telescope (like the 200-inch telescope of the Mount Palomar Observatory) we can find millions of stars in the sky.

**Stars are huge massive globes of varying sizes**. The sun, which is only an average star, but the nearest to us, is about 14 lakh kilometers in diameter. Betelgeuse, the red giant star in the constellation of Orion, is said to be about 400 million kilometers in diameter. There are also stars smaller than the Sun, but the smallest among them will be several thousand times the size of Earth.

**Stars are far apart from each other**. In estimating interstellar distances, the unit employed by scientists is a light-year. It is the distance that light travel in one year with a speed of 3 lakh kilometers per second. It is about 9.46 million million kilometers. The star close to the Sun, is Alpha Centauri, the bright star near the Southern Cross. It is about 4 1/3 lighters (41 million million kilometers) away from the sun. Though it may not be the distance between any two neighboring stars, it is apt to give us an idea of the largeness of distances between stars. Even with such large gaps, a major portion of the stellar population is said to exist as crowded **galaxies of about or above a million stars**. There are also super galaxies comprising many galaxies, even more than 400 galaxies in one. In the gaps between galaxies there are individual stars here and there. Sun is a star in an outer arm of a super galaxy, called Milky Way, containing 14 galaxies. Milky Way is about a lakh light years in diameter. The next galaxy beyond the Milky Way is Andromeda, which we can see like a constellation between Pisces and Cassiopeia. It is said to be about two million light years away from us.

Recently, with the aid of large telescopes with very large reflectors, and with spectroscopes, the scientists have probed Space to a radius of 6000 million light-years, and detected thousands of galaxies, existing at intervals therein. They say the Space and the galaxies are further also limitlessly. Most galaxies appear, in the edge-on-view like a disc with a bulge on either side at the middle, and in the face-on-view like a spiral, or like a wheel with spiral arms and no rim. The bulge is a dense crowd of stars in view. How many are the stars in the vast Space! Innumerable indeed!

All stars shed light, but differ in brightness. Betelgeuse is about 19000 times brighter than the Sun. Even the Sun's light is unbearably dazzling. How intense are the light and heat that we get at a clear midday! If at a distance of 149 million kilometers, so much light and heat arrive in radiation from the Sun, what would be the brilliance and the heat at the surface of the Sun! How much more would they be at the surface of the giant stars! Scientists say that the stars emit such enormous light and heat by nuclear fusion of hydrogen (deuterium) atoms into helium atoms, and that by such fusion, the Sun loses about four million tons of its mass every second, and therefore it may

continue to release light and heat only for about 16000 million years further. Even if the said loss be the loss in its hydrogen content, how enormous is the volume of hydrogen that is fused every second in the Sun! Four million tons' weight of hydrogen per second! Scientists say it is similar wise in the other stars also; all stars emit light and heat by nuclear fusion. The Sun has shining for a very long time. How much hydrogen would have been fused at the above rate in the Sun by this time? How much hydrogen is still in the Sun if it is to shine 16000 million years more? Scientists say that spectrum analysis of light from the Sun and other stars show that most of the elements found on Earth are present in them as well. We will forget that aspect for the present, and consider their hydrogen component alone. Scientists hold that huge clouds of gas accumulated in particular parts of the space and condensed as globose stars. Let it be so. The wonder still is how such huge clouds of gas accumulated at particular regions of the vast Space to form the Sun and billions and billions of other stars and super giant stars. Did the insensate gas by itself collect in such huge clouds at chosen intervals in the Space throughout, and then condense into huge globes, and later, at a particular time, did all such globose commence fusion of their hydrogen atoms to emit such inconceivably large light to illumine the universe? Does this uniform universal phenomenon of such magnitude throughout the vast Space, appear possible, without overall guidance of a mysterious omnipresent Superpower?

**Every star rotates around its axis**, and every galaxy rotate around its galactic axis. A galaxy may contain several clusters of 100 to 1000 stars, which rotate round their cluster axis, while all the clusters together as one unit rotate round the galactic axis. All these rotations are very speedy. The Sun, having circumference of 44 lack kilometers, moves at 250 kilometers per second. The spin and the orbital revolution in fixed high speeds keep the stars in their respective positions in the Space. Do we not see heavy planes, carrying enough fuel and hundreds of passengers with their luggage, lift and fly in the thin air above 10 kilometers from the ground by their speed of movement? Millions of stars in a galaxy move around their axis and along their orbits; yet they move in perfect harmony, and it goes on for billions of years and further, without retardation or collision?

How did all the billions of billions of stars come to rotate steadily on their axis and also in their fixed orbits? Why is it that these huge stars do not wander in Space, as beasts do in the forests, and fish do in the oceans. The movements of comets show that the stars also could have moved in eccentric paths. But, the innumerable stars appear to keep discipline, and observe precision and regularity in orbital movements. It may commendable harmony in the vast Space. Is it the work of the insensate stars themselves, or the work of a Universal Almighty who had constituted the stars, planets, moons, etc. and set the orbits, rotations, and speeds, for them? Think well. Scientist Einstein said it would reveal God.

## Section 41 **ATOMS**

Science tells that every thing in the universe is composed of atoms. **The atoms are particles of the size of about one ten-millionth of a millimeter in diameter**. Every atom is composed of sub atoms called electrons, protons and neutrons. These **sub atoms are the same in all atoms of all elements; only their numbers differ from element to element**. 6 electrons, 6 protons and 6 neutrons together compose a carbon atom; 8 electrons, 8 protons and 8 neutrons together from an oxygen atom; 79

electrons, 79 protons and 118 neutrons together compose a gold atom; and so on all atoms. The protons and neutrons, intermingled densely, form the nucleus of the atom; the electrons remain as free particles rotating around the nucleus. All the electrons revolve, with fixed speeds, in fixed orbits around the nucleus. In one atom there are several orbits, and in each orbit there are several electrons, not exceeding eighteen. The electrons keep their speeds and positions so precisely that no collision ever occurs among them in any atom. All the electrons in one orbit move with the same speed, but electrons in different orbits move with different speeds. Likewise, in all atoms of the same kind (that is to say, in atoms of the same element) the number of orbits and the number of electrons in each orbit and their speeds are the same; but they differ in atoms of different elements.

Who set originally the orbits and speeds of rotations for electrons within the atoms with such universal uniformity in atoms of the same kind, and definite diversity in atoms of different kinds? Are they set by the electrons themselves uniformly, throughout the world, irrespective of circumstances? Have they the necessary consciousness, and mutual understanding to fix them so harmoniously and uniformly? If they have not, Who reaches the electrons in atoms to direct their movements with such precision, rhythm, harmony, and uniformity throughout the world, and throughout the universe?

## Section 42 **PHYSICAL BODIES**

The case of physical body seems to be more completed, but equally more revealing also.

(i) Cells:

**Scientists say that an adult human body is composed of more than 30 million cells of varying sizes, shapes, colors and kinds.**

Every human body originates from a fertilized ovum, which is a globose single cell, less than one-tenth of a millimeter in diameter. That cell multiplies by division, and the progeny specialize into cells of different varieties and collect together in perfect arrangement to form the shapely physical body, as we have it.

**Each human cell contains 46 microscopic chromosomes, and each chromosome carries hundreds of genes**. Each gene contains detailed information on the pattern, nature, function, etc. of a small part of the body, so that all genes in a cell, together contain a complete detailed design of the whole body. In other words, every cell contains, in its 46 chromosomes together, an elaborate and complete blueprint of the entire body.

Scientists say that cells multiply by division, that is to say, one cell splits into two cells, the two into four, the four into eight, and so on. When a cell is about to split, all its chromosomes gather at its centre, and then they part into two groups of 23 chromosomes each, on either side of a midline. Then the groups recede from that line. A little later every chromosome splits into two halves, each of which then develops into a complete chromosome in a few hours. In a cell this process takes place simultaneously in all the 46 chromosomes. When the developments of the split halves of the chromosomes are complete, each group in the cell will have all the 46 complete

chromosomes of a cell, with all the genes containing complete information of the body. Then the swelled cell breaks into two new cells, which are identical with the parent cell.

Evidently, in the above said process of division and development, each divided half gets correct duplicates of all that went to the other half in the division. Can a divided half of an insensate thing procure and furnish itself with duplicates of all that were lost in the division? If it cannot, should there not be some Power behind the process who supplies the duplicates to the divided halves to make them complete chromosomes. Who can that Power be? The process involves a precise consciousness of what each divided half lost in the division, and also an ability to plant new genes with correct information in the split parts of the chromosomes, to make them full. **Who can reach the interior of a cell to do these things**? The process takes place constantly in all living beings throughout the world. Surely, that Supplier must be a Super conscious Power, who is Omnipresent, Omniscient, and Omnipotent, indeed!

(ii) The Ovum (minute egg):

Besides the normal cells, there are semi cells having only 23 chromosomes. They are the sperm in males, and ova in females. Science tells us that a girl about to attain puberty, will have about 3 lakhs of minute ovules in her two ovaries together. After attaining of puberty, at intervals of 4 weeks, the pituitary gland in her head spurts into her bloodstream the hormone, FSH (follicle stimulating hormone), in quantity sufficient to stimulate one ovule to develop. When it reaches an ovary, one ovule receives the hormone and develop into an ovum which a fluid-filled follicle around it. It rises to the surface of the ovary and bulges out like a pea-sized blister. When it becomes ripe, the Pituitary gland spurts another hormone, LH, into the bloodstream, and it reaches the ripe ovum. The follicle bursts and throws the ovum into the Fallopian tube by its side. Pushed by gentle waves in the tube, the ovum slowly rolls down the tube to find a sperm for fertilization.

Can these intricate process involving different parts of the body, like the ovary in the lower abdomen, pituitary in the head, and the bloodstream that circulates all through the body, take place so correctly and in time, without guidance of a Conscious Being or Power? Can they be mere chance occurrences when they happen alike in all females in the World? If they are not chance occurrences, who guides them in appropriate times, through out the world?

(iii) Pituitary gland:

There are several glands in the body which produce hormones for various functions. One of them is the pea-sized pituitary gland at the lower brain. It produces nine different hormones, one by one as occasions need, and stops production as soon as the need of the time is over. It collects the necessary ions from the chyle in the blood-stream, synthesizes them into the required hormone, and spurts it into the bloodstream to be taken to the needy part of the body. When the body of a woman becomes fit for reproduction, her pituitary gland produces the hormone FSH, just sufficient to stimulate one ovule to develop into an ovum. Later, when the ovum is ripe, it produces another hormone LH, to burst its follicle so that the ovum may reach the Fallopian tube and the womb. When a child birth approaches the pituitary produces the hormone Prolactin, to stimulate production of milk in the breasts. When the fetus is ripe to be delivered, it

produces the hormone Oxytocin, to contract the womb strongly to push out the baby. When the lips of the baby touch the mother's nipple, her pituitary produces Oxytocin, to contract the milk glands to flow milk to the nipple, and stops its production which the baby stops suckling. And so on.

**Such production of different hormones, from time to time, to suit the need of the occasion, by one pea-sized gland is remarkable**. The absorption of requisite ions alone from the bloodstream, and immediate production of the required hormone, the timely changes in productions and their stoppage as soon as the need is covered, all require considerable awareness, alertness and intelligence. Can the insensate gland, do these things by itself, without stimulation from some Conscious Being? When such things happen in all, everywhere, does it not indicate work of a Universal Power to guide them?

(iv) The Sperm:

A sperm is a male motile semi cell, having only 23 chromosomes in the nucleus of its head. It is only 1/2500 of a millimeter long, with a head and a tail. When deposited in a wet vagina, it swims forward by whip lashing its tail briskly in the secretion from the mucous membrane of the womb. **Obviously there is Life in the sperm**. It is called 'seed' of the human being. It is said that sperm are produced in 1000 tubules in each testis, at the rate of millions per hour. Who supplies Life to the myriads of sperm so fast? Science says that at an ejaculation more than a hundred million sperm are deposited in the vagina, but only one of them is allowed to unite with the ovum in the Fallopian tube. It may be that in the race, five or more sperm simultaneously reach near the ovum, which is about two hundred times bigger than a sperm. But, only one sperm is allowed to enter into and unite with the ovum. As the ovum and the sperm are semi cells, the genes in the ovum contain designs of half of the mother's body, and the genes in the sperm contain designs of half of the father's body. When they unite, the fertilized ovum should have complete design of a whole body. So, only a sperm whose genes would correctly supplement, and not duplicate, the genes in the ovum can be allowed to unite with the ovum. It may be that more than one sperm near the ovum have this qualification; but even then, as said above, only one of them can be allowed to fuse with the ovum; or else the fertilized ovum will have to contain (3x23) 69, or a larger multiple of 23 chromosomes, which is impossible for a cell. The restriction is worked out thus: As soon as a sperm touches the ovum, it spurts an enzyme on the touched spot, and immediately the membrane of the ovum at the spot dissolves, and through that opening the sperm thrusts it head into the ovum, which is thereby fertilized. Instantaneously the jelly coat around the ovum thickens and hardens to ward off entry by another sperm. When the first mentioned sperm has thrust its head fully into the ovum, its tail falls off, and the opening in the membrane of the ovum closes firmly. These processes take place so quickly as to leave no chance for a second sperm to enter the ovum. The fertilized ovum begins to develop into an embryo.

How cleverly and quickly is the fortress made secure in the fertilized ovum! How complicated is the selection of the sperm for fertilization, which involves an accurate awareness of the contents of genes in the ovum and in the sperm that are coming near it! It is the sperm that brings Life to the ovum. As the sperm unites with the ovum, the Life in the sperm becomes Life in the fertilized ovum; and later it becomes the Life in the baby that results. So the identity of the sperm that enters the ovum is of vital

importance. How one sperm alone out of the hundred million brought to the vagina, is enabled to enter the ovum which is 200 times bigger than a sperm, remains a mystery to science. When it happens so regularly and uniformly in all women on Earth, the phenomenon may not be a chance occurrence; it must be a clearly arranged one. Does the Karmadhyaksha guide the selection of sperm to bring about reincarnation of a particular Soul?

(v) Fertilization:

The union of a sperm and an ovum, is called fertilization; and the product of such union is called a fertilized ovum or zoosperm (pronounced as o-a-sperm). Aitareya Upanishd (2:1) reckons Soul's entry into a sperm as the inception, and fertilization as the completion of incarnation of a person.

Scientists say that, among the 46 chromosomes in a cell, two are sex chromosomes. They are either X-shaped of Y-shaped. In all the cells of a woman, both the sex chromosomes are X-shaped, so every semi cell in her (which is an ovum) has one X-chromosome. In the cells of a male, one sex chromosome is X-shaped, and the other is Y-shaped, so that half the total number of sperm in him at any time have X-chromosomes, and the rest have Y-chromosomes. If the sperm that unites with ovum has X-chromosome, the fertilized ovum will have two X-chromosomes; and therefore the child that develops will be a female. If the uniting sperm has a Y-chromosome, the fertilized ovum will have an X-chromosome and a Y-chromosome; and therefore the child that develops will be a male.

Scientists have succeeded in preserving sperm and ova frozen in liquid nitrogen, so that embryos can be prepared for implanting in the womb of an apparently barren woman, or a surrogate. But, so far, attempts to separate X-carrying sperm from Y-carrying sperm have not succeeded. Though scientists are hopeful, it is obvious that the process is a difficult one. But it happens so easily in the womb, so that the children born in a period, in any district in the world, are in number fairly equal in sex. Can it be a mere chance occurrence when it happens so regularly everywhere and at all times? If it is not so, who or what guides the phenomenon in the wombs throughout the world? The Quran (3:6) says,
"He it is who fashioneth you in the wombs as pleaseth Him".

(vi) The Embryo:

The single cell that is a fertilized ovum quickly becomes an embryo. It multiplies by successive divisions, and the progeny transform into different kinds of cells, like brain cells, bone cells, muscle cells, nerve cells, gland cells, etc. whose systematic arrangement forms a shapely embryo. One cell splits into two, each of which becomes a full-fledged cell like the predecessor cell; the two then divide like wise into four; and so on; at intervals of about 15 hours regularly. As cells increase in number, the ovum becomes a ball of cells, called a **morula**. It rolls slowly down the Fallopian tube. By the fifth day of fertilization, the morula will have more than a hundred cells. The stock of nutriments that was in the ovum, would have become scanty by that time. All the cells then rise to the surface of the ball, leaving the centre as an empty cavity. Then the morula is said to have become a **blastula** (which is a spherical single layer of cells enclosing a central cavity). Pushed by waves in the Fallopian tube, the blastula hastens

to reach the womb, whose inner walls have by this time become welled with fresh nutriments. If the blastula reaches the womb in time, it sticks onto the soft lining of the womb whose mucous coating has already become sticky. The cells that are in contact with the womb, shoot out tiny feelers which cling to the thick soft lining inside the womb and begin to absorb the nutriments in store therein, and convey them to the cavity of the blastula to nourish the other cells. All the cells grow and multiply, and crowd into a thick mass. By the 12th day or so, that mass will comprise more than a lakh of cells, enough to start formation of an embryo, umbilical cord, and placenta (without stopping multiplication).

Hitherto, all the cells formed were exact duplicates of the original cell, the fertilized ovum; but now specializations as brain cells, bone cells, muscle cells, etc. commence. A Soul radiating vital power, and also detailed blueprints of the body being present in the blastula, the microscopic cells have the potential for such varied transformation. As every cell has detailed designs of all parts of a body, in 46 bundles of information, it is up to a cell to unfold one of those bundles, adopt one of the genes in it, and follow it up, to become a component of one particular part of the body. **So, to form an embryo, some cells in the blastula become brain cells, some become heart cells, some become bone cells, some become muscle cells, etc.** and all settle in appropriate locations in a systematic arrangement to constitute a shapely human embryo.

How complex is the process! How does a cell chose and adopt one gene from the thousands that are in it, and discard all the rest completely and finally? A spot in the embryo may be junction of a bone, a muscle, a nerve, and an artery, which are different from each other; but are physically connected. A cell has to know the exact role it is to play – a bone, a nerve, a muscle, or what. A cell has to know it before it transforms for the specialized part. How does it know which part of the embryo it is to form? A wrong cell should not enter the composition of any part of the embryo. A bone cell should not be a component of a muscle, or a muscle cell a component of a bone. The hands must be of equal length, but the fingers must differ in length. The thighbone must be straight; the ribs must be like semi-circular. Only the correct number of cells, no more, no less, should gather to form an organ. **The genes in the sperm contain designs of a male body; and the genes in the ovum contain designs of a female body;** so the fertilized ovum and its progeny cells contain equally designs of male body and designs of female body. **Care has to be taken that the developing embryo is unisexual**, in order to safeguard the ability for future reproductions. That is to say, all the special features of one sex alone shall develop in the embryo, and all the special features of the opposite sex shall be left undeveloped (like the breasts in men and clitoris in the women). All such aspects have to be kept in view when a cell transforms as a particular specie. How the new cells select their role and location in the embryo remains a mystery to science. Can the insensate cells themselves do it in mutual understanding without guidance from a Superintellegent Being? Does not the organized way in which the cells multiply, transform, and assemble in perfect arrangement to form the different parts of the embryo, reveal stimulation guidance and care of a Superconscious Mysterious Power?

The transformations of a cell are not so simple an affair. All silkworms transform into one variety of moths only; but the identical cells of a blastula are to transform into different varieties of cells – brain cells, bone cells, muscle cells, gland cells, etc. **These cells vary in shape, size, color, and functional capacity**. The bone cells are hard and

spiky; muscle cells are soft, contractile, and elastic. Nerve cells are long with axon and dendrites, and some of them are long enough to extend from a toe to the spinal cord; the cone cells of a retina are short, and tiny enough to be a lakh and half in a square millimeter. The rod cells in the eye are sensitive to brightness, the cone cells are sensitive to colors; the hair cells in the cochlea of the ear are sensitive to sound. Nerve cells convey sensations and impulses; gland cells absorb ions from the bloodstream, and synthesize them into hormones, enzymes, or proteins. Bone cells are white; muscle cells are red or brown. Sensory nerve cells are grey; motor nerve cells are white. All the skin cells must have the same color except at specific regions. It is the identical cells of the blastula that transform into such widely different categories, to constitute embryo. **These complex transformations take place in perfect order and harmony to for a lively body form.** Can these highly complex phenomenon take place without a guidance and control of a Conscious Being? They happen so correctly in millions of wombs simultaneously in the world. The process of reproduction is more or less the same in all living beings. Does not the uniformity of the process in all beings indicate the universal nature of the Being that guides and controls these processes within the wombs? The Mahanarayana Upanishad (1:1) says that the omnipresent Lord of Creation works in the embryo.

(vii) Vision:

As soon as we just think of looking at an object, our eyes turn that side and grasp a clear vision of the desired thing. It happens so immediately. To achieve it the reflection of the object must be precisely focused on the retina of the eye. It requires the lenses of the eye to be of correct curvature that suits the distance of the object from the eye. It is the ciliary muscles around the lens in the eye that exert a push or a pull on the elastic lens to make its curvature precisely correct for the occasion. **Between our looking at a distance object and at a near one, the process of correcting the curvature of the lens in the eye must necessarily be done with the utmost precision.** Who knows the exact distance of the object from the eye, the correct curvature of lens appropriate to that distance, the exact push or pull to be exerted on the lens for the occasion – these so quickly as to cause an immediate clear vision of the object? Can it be the insensate ciliary muscles themselves, or, are they guided by a Superintellent Almighty Being so prompt in action? If there is such a being, He must be omnipresent, to be available at the eyes of all living beings alike, even in the small eyes of the smallest ants.

(viii) The human body:

**What an efficient complex machine is the human body!** It comprises 206 bones, 200 joints, numerous muscles, ligaments and tubes, innumerable nerves, etc. arranged in perfect harmony. It possesses more than 6000 kilometers of capillaries besides the blood vessels; 300 millions of alveoli (small chambers of the lungs), 120 million minute rods and cones on a paper thick retina of the eye, a million filtering units (nephrons) in each kidney, 20000 hair cells in the cochlea of the inner ear, 1000 tubules in the testis or 3 lakh ovules in the ovary, etc., etc. Each cell contains 46 chromosomes; each having hundreds of genes in the nucleus, and hundreds of mitochondria in the cytoplasm outside the nucleus. Each cell, in its total genes, carries a complete detailed blueprint of the whole body. The mitochondria in the cells generate electricity needed for various bodily functions. Muscle fibres contract telescopically on electric

stimulation. Many functions, like pumping of heart, focusing of eyes, raising or folding limbs, chewing of food, pushing of food through the digestive tract, rolling of ovum through the Fallopian tube, delivery of child, expulsion of urine, holding the body erect, etc. are all done through contractions and relaxations of muscle fibres under electric stimulations & withdrawals. Whatever be the food we take, it is broken into basic ions, out of which the various gland-cells synthesize different hormones, enzymes, proteins, fats, sugars, milk, etc. needed for various purposes in the body. How speedily do the salivary glands produce saliva to convert the starch in our food into glucose! All glands are of like alertness. When blood passes through the nephrons, urea and other poisons and wastes are filtered off efficiently. The blood itself carries phagocytes which ingest and destroy things foreign to the blood, like bacteria and dust particles. In the tubules of tests, millions of sperm are multiplied every hour. Grey nerves transmit sensations from the sensory organs to the brain, and white nerves convey messages from the brain to the organs for action. The first half of a capillary is the ending of an artery, and the other half is the beginning of a vein. When red blood cells, in single file, squeeze through the capillaries, by the squeeze oxygen is released to the cells; and on release of the squeeze carbon dioxide is drawn in from the cells, except in the lungs where the squeeze ejects carbon dioxide from the blood cells into the air, and release of squeeze draws in oxygen from the air inhaled into the lungs. A network of cells in the brainstem monitors all incoming sensations like sound, smell and touch, to prevent disturbance of sleep, but even a faint sound of baby's crying can pass through it to awaken the deep-sleeping mother. How many more wonderful functions go on, from moment to moment, in our body! Every complex machine announces the skill of its maker and operator. The human body is a highly complex machine which performs so many complex jobs so speedily and efficiently. Surely there must be a mysterious entity that made it and operates it. The harmonious coordination of its works is simply wonderful. The more we think of it, the more we become convinced of the reality of that entity and of Its being a Superconscious Being, omnipresent and omnipotent.

(ix) Of plants

A contemplation of the body of a plant also leads to the same disclosure. We find flowers of beautiful colors and smells, like lotus, rose, and mango flowers, blossoming in plants that are green. It may be specializations of identical plant cells and leaf cells, flower cells, fruit cells, seed cells, bark cells, wood cells, sap cells, root cells, etc. that go on in germinating seeds, as the specializations of blastula-cells occur in an embryo. How systematic are the arrangement of petals in a lotus or rose flower, and the arrangement of mango flowers in a bunch? How tasty are the fruits of many trees! Do these specializations and arrangements occur at the choice of the insensible plant cells themselves; or are they guided and controlled by a Superconscious Omnipresent Power or Being?

We see a bud at the tip of many plants. In a fig tree, peepul, banyan, or jack tree, it is about an inch long. It is the bud at the tip of a young sapling that unfolds gradually, leaf by leaf, and ultimately becomes a big tree. When we try to see the interior of a bud, we find leaves and stem, becoming smaller and smaller, tender and tender, and then becoming rudimentary and microscopic. Ultimately then become invisibly subtle. Evidently, the whole tree is contained in a minute or subtle form in the bud, **to be unfolded slowly in the course of decades or centuries**. The peepal is a big tree that grows several centuries. The unfolding of the bud goes on, all that time. When we split

a bean, we find between its cotyledons the embryo of a plant with two distinct leaves and a central bud. The seed of a peepul is very small. Inside that small seed is the microscopic embryo that will expand slowly into a seedling and a big tree. How correctly are the stems and branches, leaves, flowers, and fruits, condensed in invisibly minute form in that small seed! The architect, who shapes the seeds so efficiently, in millions every season, must be the Super-intelligent Being who deals in material things and matterless realities alike.

Section 43 INFERENCES

Contemplations, such as described above, reveal the existence and care of a universal Supreme Being, in every natural phenomenon. A perfect order and telling harmony are seen in movements of the huge stars in the sky, in movements of minute electrons in atoms, in the constitution and function of physical bodies of men, animals and plants – in short, in all natural phenomena in the sky and in the world; and they reveal a Superconscious Universal Being at work to direct, guide, and control them. It may be similar contemplations that induced the great scientist, Albert Einstein, to declare his belief in "God who reveals Himself in the harmony of all that exists". The more we ponder in the above line, the more we feel convinced of the reality of declarations of great thinkers on God.

God is the Creator of everything, and from Him (i.e. by His stimulation) does everything function (Bhagavad Gita 10:8).
There are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all, in all. (Bible 1 Cor. 12:6)
It is God's will that moves all things, brings all things into existence, and sustain them (Philokalia Vol. 2 p 279)
Not a leaf falleth but He knoweth it. (Quran 6:59).

Section 44 **PERSONAL GOD**

The revelation in contemplations of the kind described above, is the existence of an invisible cosmic Being who regulates all the mysterious phenomena in the universe. In Indian philosophy that Being is called Brahman, or God. **The revelation is of God in a dual aspect** – He is Supergod who directs, guides, and controls various activities in the sky and in the world; He is also an abstract entity which exists everywhere, in the limitless Space and in the minute interior of microscopic cells. When it is said that **God bears a dual aspect**, it means that He is a single entity possessing two aspects, like a coin having two distinct sides. He is a mysterious combination of both aspects – **He exists as an abstract entity, and also behaves like a Superperson. Therefore, it is open to a person to think of God in either aspect.** The devotee may visualize God in a personal form and offer worship to such personage; or, he may think of God as the abstract Vital Power of Consciousness present in all beings everywhere and devotionally worship His presence in every being seen.

Bhagavad Gita (4:11) says "In whatever mode men approach God, in the same mode will God meets them".
Philokalia (Vol. 2 p 186) also declare "God reveals Himself to each person according to each person's mode of conceiving Him".

Some may express (as in Maitrayani Upanishad 5:3) that God has two forms – a corporeal form and an incorporeal form, that is to say, an embodied existence and a formless existence. They are apparently justified by God's constant omnipresence and His occasional vivid appearances in definite personal forms, as He did before Sree Ramakrishna. (See Sect. 48 below). His vision of God (in 1874) in the form of Jesus Christ exemplifies both aspects of God. 'Sri Ramakrishna the Great Master' (2:21:3 at p 296) reports that vision thus:

"Very soon the person approached him, and from the bottom of the Master's pure heart came out the words 'Jesus! Jesus the Christ, ….' Jesus the god-man, then embraced the Master and disappeared into his body, and the Master entered into ecstasy, lost normal consciousness and remained identified for some time with the Omnipresent Brahman with attributes."

'Brahman with attributes' is the Sagunabrahman, the Impersonal God. Sri Ramakrishna's vision of God as "a marvelous god-man of very fair complexion" with a beautiful face and long eyes, coming towards him, exemplifies God's appearance in a definite personal form; and the disappearance into his body exemplifies the reality of God as an abstract Being. Puranas mention God to have appeared from invisibility to visible personality before Prahlada, and before Markandeya, and to have, after saving the devotee, vanished back to invisibility. Bible tells that, when Jesus was baptized, "The Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him" (Luke 3:22) and, disappearing into his body, made him "full of the Holy Ghost" (ibid 4:1), whereupon he began to deliver sermons and work wonders in God's name. These narrations clearly proclaim the dual aspect of God.

We observed (sec. 8 above) that **God's real existence is as a cosmic Power, the Universal Vital Consciousness.** Vedas identify Him as Cosmic Chaitanyam, and refer to Him as 'Chith' which is a short for Chaitanyam. Upanishads and hymns describe Him as Chaitanyarupi, Chit-svarupa, Chinmaya, etc. – all of which names literally mean 'of the form of Chaitanyam' or Vital Consciousness.

**Though God is, in reality, a cosmic abstract entity, He may, if He wills, appear as a corporeal person or other being.** Soul is also an abstract entity of Consciousness, and (in Sect. 1 above) we noted instances of appearance of discarnate Souls as identifiable apparitions. The incidents connected with James Chaffin, and Lady Barrett's patient, are fairly clear and convincing in the affair. **If individual Souls, which are minute fragment of vital Consciousness, can appear in body forms, it is certain that God, who is the Total Vital Consciousness, can also appear in personal or other body forms, if He wills.** (cf. P 19,20 above) God's personal appearances are always casual and brief. They cannot be said to show that God has a personal form; but such occasional appearances would justify our visualization of God in a personal or other form in our contemplations and worships.

On our part, normally, a form is a necessity for an impressive thought on God. **We generally think of an object through a name and form** (nama rupa). Name and form go together inseparably; one brings along with it the other also to the mind. When we just try to think of an object, its name and form come to the mind; and all further thoughts center round them. So, to think of an object, we require an idea of its form; the conception of a form will carry with it a name also; so a form is necessary for a

sustained thought of any object. If the object is formless, it is generally difficult to sustain a firm thought on it. Bhagavad Gita (12:2-5) say that all meditations on God, in the personal aspect or in the abstract aspect, lead to the same result, but to meditate on the abstract aspect is very difficult for the body-conscious man. So, **men generally conceive and contemplate God in a personal form. It, not only makes meditation easy, but also impresses mind, helps concentration of thoughts on God; facilitates worship, causes special satisfaction or delight in worship, and intensifies devotion**. Ramapurvatapini Upanishad (1:7) observes

"To facilitate the purposes of worshippers, form is attributed to Brahman, the formless all-pervading sole Being of Consciousness."

It says that God is a formless universal Being and a form to Him is man's artifice for his convenience of contemplation and veneration. But the forms actually adopted to represent God are not devices of mere fancies; they are forms in some way or other related with God; mostly forms in which God is believed to have appeared at some time before some one. **When Sagunabrahman is thus conceived in a personal form, He is mentioned as a Personal God, or God** simply. Correspondingly, **when He is conceived in the all-pervading formless aspect, He is mentioned as the Impersonal God or the Godhead**.

The usage of distinct names, as God and Godhead, should not be understood to refer to two entities, or to two forms or the Divinity. God and Godhead are one and the same Divinity, and not two at all. It is like a coin, one face of which is a personal representation, and the other an abstract drawing. Vishnu, Siva, Durga, etc. are Personal Gods, and Easwara (Sagunabrahman) is the Impersonal God in Hinduism. Jehovah, Father, and Son are Personal Gods and Holy Host (Spirit of God) is the Impersonal God in Christianity. (Ex 6:3, 1 Cor 3:16). Islam recognizes no specific personal form to God; but the direction in Quran to turn in the direction of the Kaabah at Mecca in all prayers (Sura 2:144,150) indicates a conception of His definite, presence at the specific spot; to the ordinary man it may spell a definite existence at the Kaabah. And, the description in Surah 2:115 etc. "Whithersoever ye turn, there is Allah's countenance; Lo! Allah is All-Embracing, All-Knowing." clearly mentions His omnipresence, which implies impersonal existence. Sri Ramakrishna's experience (vide p 80-81 below) shows that Sufi Muslims think of God in the form of Mohamed with long beard.

Besides Personal Gods, Incarnations of a Personal God are also worshipped as Personal Gods. Though an incarnation may exhibit human traits and divine traits, the devotees think only of the divine aspects in His life, the divine personality displayed by Him. Rama and Krishna are worshipped by the Hindus as Incarnations of Vishnu. Jesus Christ is worshipped by the Catholics as Incarnation of the 'Son' of the Trinity (Philokalia Vol. 2 p 287). Buddhists, Jains and Sikhs, who do not speak of God, worship their spiritual leaders (mainly, Buddha, Mahavir Jain and Guru Nanak) almost as divine personages.

## Section 45 THE ONENESS

All religions, which acknowledge God, declare that God is one only, and there is not another. (Vide Svetasvatara Upanishad 3:2, 3; Bible, Eph 4:6; Quran 3:2, etc.). Upanishads say plainly that a personal form to God is not a reality (Maitrayani Upanishad 5:3), but a mere attribution by man for his convenience of worshipping Him.

The attribution of personal form for God may be as many as human imagination can devise. If God is conceived in two or more personal forms, like Vishnu, Siva and Durga, or Father and Son, apparently there may be so many Personal Gods for individual worships; but in reality there is only One God. Any actor, putting on different dresses, may appear as a king and a waiter; but he is neither king, nor waiter; he is really Mr. So-and-so always. Merely because a religion allows different forms for worship of God, with different names given to each, it cannot be said that the religion recognizes plurality of Gods.
Skandopanishad (8) asks devotees to bow,
"To Siva of the form of Vishnu, (and) To Vishnu of the form of Siva." ("Sivaya Vishnurupaya Sivarupaya Vishnave").
Rudrahridaya Upanishad (6) observes:
"Whoever bows to Vishnu, they are bowing to Siva; whoever devoutly worships Vishnu, they worship Siva."
Plainly the Upanishads preach the oneness of Vishnu and Siva, the oneness of God in two personal forms of Vishnu and Siva. They signify that **Vishnu and Siva are not two, but one only in two forms, or roles**. This example applies to all personal Gods equally. They are worshipped only as Personal forms, or Personal representations of the single God, Easwara, and not as different personages of Divinity. Any notion otherwise, I am afraid, betrays a misunderstanding of religion.

In hymns and Upanishads concerning Vishnu, He is praised as the all-pervading Sole God; hymns and Upanishads concerning Siva praise Him equally as the all-pervading Sole God. Vishnu is God, Siva is God. They are not conceived as parts of God; each is the sole God, that is to say, the whole and complete God. Nor is God conceived partly in Vishnu and partly in Siva. God is wholly and completely Vishnu; God is wholly and completely Siva; Vishnu and Siva are each the whole and complete God. **The one God is worshipped in the personal name and form of Vishnu by some men, and in the personal name and form of Siva by some others, and in other names and forms by other people.**

Likewise, is the conception of Trinity – the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – of the Catholic theology. When Father, Son and Holy Spirit, are said to be three Personalities of God, it does not mean that each is different from the other two. **The three are one only**. Each of the triune is the whole and complete God. Nor is one of the Trinity come into being through another, or dependent on another. (Vide Philokalia Vol. 2 p 173, 165, 296). St. Maximo explains the concept thus:
"The Divinity is not partially in the Father, nor is Father part of God. The Divinity is not partially in the Son, nor is the Son part of God. The Divinity is not partially in the Holy Spirit, nor is the Holy Spirit part of God. For the Divinity is not divisible, nor is the Father or the Son, or the Holy Spirit, incomplete God. On the contrary, the whole and complete Divinity is completely in the complete Father; the whole and complete Divinity is completely in the complete Son; and the whole and complete Divinity is completely in the complete Holy Spirit."
Bible also says
"There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one." (1 John 5:7)

When belief in the One God for the universe becomes firm in a devotee, his concept normally develops from Personal God to the all pervading Impersonal God.

## Section 46 THE CREATOR

Bhagavad Gita (13:17) tells
"Brahman …is to be known as the Creator; Controller and the Swallower of beings". We have observed (sect. 8 above) that Sagunabrahman the Impersonal God, and Nature the creative genius, worked together to create the universe of beings. Nature created body forms, and God supplied Life to them. Contemplation of things in nature (sect. 42 above) reveal that the mysterious processes, like efficient fertilization of ovum, correct specializations and assemblages of cells, etc. are all directed, guided and controlled by the omnipresent God. Thus, the main architect or creation of beings is God Himself, though Nature does all the spadework in the affair.

Bible (Gen 1:1-27) tells God to have created heaven and earth and all beings.
Quran (10:4) also tells: "Lo ! your Lord is Allah who created the heavens and the earth in six Days, then He established Himself upon the throne, directing all things" and explains (22:47) the reckoning;
"A Day with Allah is as a thousand years of what ye reckon".

Thus, scriptures speak alike of God as the Creator of all beings.

Svetasvatara Upanishad (6:17) regards the omniscient all-pervading God as the Ruler and Protector of the world.
Bhagavad Gita (4:7, 8) details His rule,
"Whenever virtue fall low, and vices rise high, God incarnates Himself.
"To protect the pious and destroy the wicked, and to establish virtue, God incarnate age after age."
Bible (Ps 36:6) praises God as the Preserver of man and beast.
Quran (39:62) also declares
"Allah is Creator of all things, and He is the Guardian over all things."

Finally, God is said to impel all beings to return to Him. (see Philokalia Vol. 2 p 282).
Svetasvatara Upanishad (3:2) observes,
"After creating and protecting all the worlds, in the end He withdraws them unto Himself:.
Bible (Ps 90:3) hymns: "Thou turneth men to destruction, and sayest Return, ye children of men."
Quran (40:3) also tells "There is no God save Him; Unto Him is the journeying."

Thus God is said to absorb back all souls that came forth from Him. He is therefore depicted also as the Destroyer or Swallower of all beings.
"Of Him and through Him and to Him are all things" (Bible, Rom 11:36).

## Section 47 PRAYER

The early men who wondered at the natural phenomena, like the blowing of storms, rising of clouds, appearance of rainbows, lightning and thunders, heavy downpours and floods, eruptions of volcanoes, occurrence of epidemics, deaths, childbirths, etc. thought them to be works of celestial persons whom they called gods. Particular gods

were deemed to preside over particular phenomena. Different nations called them by different names. The god of rains was called Jupiter by the Romans, Zeus by the Greeks, Marduk by the Babylonians, and Indra by the Indians. The god of seas was Neptune to the Romans, Poseidon to the Greeks, and Varuna to the Indians. The goddess of love was Venus to the Romans, Aphrodite to the Greeks, and Rati to the Indians. And so on. All the pleasant phenomena like the blooming of plants, abundance of harvest, luck in ventures, childbirths, etc. were the works of benevolence of the respective gods, and all the unpleasant phenomena like epidemics, floods, accidents, etc. were the displays of their anger. The god of rains could cause timely pleasant rains to promote profuse growth of fruits and grains; he could equally cause devastating floods or disastrous droughts to starve the people and the cattle. As men were struck by a sense of fear of displeasure of the gods, they thought of pleasing the gods with offerings, dances, and songs of praise. So they began to worship gods. When they began to render worships, the idea struck them that, if well propitiated, the gods might favor the worshipper. Then, they began to supplicate prayers at the end of every worship, requesting success in efforts, avoidance of obstructions, gratification of desires, increase of wealth and health etc. Every hymn addressed to a god contained, at its end or so, a prayer for some benefaction.

The gods were not conceived to be omnipresent deities; they were only heavenly persons with superhuman powers, who were normally invisible to men, but could appear before them in a visible form and talk with them, if the gods desired so (much as apparitions do). Puranas mention god Indra to have appeared before Kunti, and Karna, god Varuna to have appeared before Rama, and talked with them.

When the early thinkers noted the prevalence of perfect order and harmony in the universe, in a way conducive to the welfare and pleasantness of the world, they thought that, if the diverse phenomena were controlled by different gods without a common superior over them, such a perfect order and harmony would not have prevailed so universally; and therefore they thought there was a Supreme Lord over all gods and the whole universe. With that inference came the understanding that such Supreme Lord was omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent. They called that Supreme Lord s **'God' of the universe**.

When conception rose from gods presiding over particular affairs in the world, to an Almighty God presiding over all affairs in the universe, many persons preferred to worship the Supreme God, instead of the gods, and to address their prayers for gratification of desires to God Himself. But, the generality of the commoners continued in the old way to worship gods and to seek their benefactions in particular needs. Probably they thought gods were more accessible and were easily pleased with offerings. Bhagavad Gita (4:12) observes,
"Persons desiring success in efforts, worship gods with offerings, because success in work is quickly attained (thereby) in this world of mortals."
Such practices were not dissuaded by the enlightened men, who regarded them as expressions of a primary or preliminary stage of spiritual understanding. Even the founders of organized religions, who insisted on worship of the Supreme God alone, directed their votaries not to disparage the worship of gods.

Bible expressed it as an Ordinance of God, "Thou shall not revile the gods." (Ex 22:28) Quran (6:109) also directed, "Revile not those unto whom they (the idolaters) pray beside Allah..."
Bhagavad Gita went a step further, as it said,
"Men, who are led by their own nature and are stupefied by desires, approach the other gods through prescribed rituals. (ibid 7:20)
"Whoever faithfully yearns to worship whatever form (of divinity), his firm faith, as such, God affirms (ibid 7:21)
As the former verse (7:20) refers to worship of "other gods" the "form" referred to in this latter verse must be the form of a god so worshipped. It then signifies that, whatever be the god one yearns to worship to attain his desire, if his faith is firm (achala), it will be supported by God.
"(When) with such (firm) faith, he earnestly worships such form (of divinity), through it (through such worship) he gets him desires gratified by God Himself". (ibid 7:22).
Because, God considers "Even the worshippers of other gods, who pray with faith and devotion, are praying to God Himself in an anomalous way". (ibid 9:89)

Thus, Bhagavad Gita tells that, when a fervent prayer is made to a god, it is not the god who hears the prayer, it is the Supreme God himself. Man's experiences follow the blooming of his Karmabhavas. God alone can direct the order of blooming of Karmabhavas and thereby shape his experiences in life. When a person, who is ignorant of this fact, believes (without the least trace of doubt) that the god whom he approaches will gratify his desire, and in that firm faith makes prayers to that god, he is virtually appealing to the Divinity who has the power to grant his prayer. The omniscient God, knowing the suppliant's sincere faith and earnest efforts, overlooks his ignorant follies, and, deeming his soulful prayers, as been made to God Himself "in an anomalous way", gratifies his desire.

**It follows from the above, that a fervent prayer for fulfillment of a desire made directly to God, in full faith, will be heard by God.** Bhagavad Gita (7:16) observes that persons in distress and persons longing for wealth pray to God. Though their worships of God are prompted by desires, Gita accepts them as worthy men (Gita 7:18) because their fervent prayers are apt to develop supreme devotion in them in the long run. A prayer becomes fervent, when it rises from the Soul. Only a just desire can cause such a prayer. When the prayer rises from the Soul, the whirling waves of the Soul would become emotional and rotate with higher acceleration and vigour, and the spreading waves emanating from them will also become more vigorous with the emotion. One external sign of it will be that tears will gush down the cheeks. They are not tears of grief, but only tears of intense emotion.

Philokalia (Vol. 3, p. 45) observes,
"Unless the words of prayer penetrate to the Soul's depths, no tears will moisten your cheeks" and also tells
"If you pray with tears, all you ask will be heard." (ibid Vol. 1, p.58)
Quran (2:186) tells: "God answers the prayer of the suppliant when he crieth unto God".
Bible also tells: "All things whatever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive". (Mat 21:22).
The word 'believing' in this verse is significant. The prayer must be in full belief, unstained by any trace of doubt in God's benefaction.

When prayer is made with unrestrainable tears, the Karmabhava that arises from the prayer will be rotating very vigorously. In that case, if God so wills, He may set that extraordinary Karmabhava with the current Prarabdhakarma and direct its early bloom and fruition. (cf. p. 54 above). If God does so, the desire in the prayer gets fulfilled soon; **and God will then be said to have heard the prayer**.

The prayers of the kind described above have certain shortcomings. As they involve a prayer (request) for the suppliant's worldly benefits, the venerations he does are for his own sake, not for God's sake; they are parts of his efforts to earn the worldly benefits. Praying to God for a material benefit is virtually trying to make God an instrument for acquiring that benefit; **it is not an act of devotion**. So, though the suppliant may get his desire gratified by God, he does not get God's grace or good will. Furthermore, the expectation for a benefit will last only till it is achieved. Thereafter, the suppliant's remembrance of God will lose its vigour, and become meager, or mere routine. So, the purposeful devotion or attachment he had to God at the prayer is more or less temporal. In fact, **prayers with worldly ambitions do not cause a spiritual advancement**.

There is another kind of prayers which involve a lasting attachment to God. They are prayers that contain no prayer (request) for earthly benefits. They are plain expressions of love and reverence to God. They consist only of recitals of praise of God, or recitations of His names (like Sahasranamas). Though they contain no prayer for anything, such recitals and recitations are called 'Prayers' in all languages, merely because they are addressed to God. A pure devotee will regard his prayers to God too sacred to be mixed with mundane affairs. Whatever be his miseries he will not pollute his prayer of reverent love to God with a request for earthly favours. When Kuchela of starving poverty called on Krishna, he did not request any help for the livelihood of his starving family. When Swami Vivekananda, in his early youth, was under burning anxiety for the sustenance of his widowed mother and helpless siblings, he made no request for help before goddess Kali when he had her vision at his Guru's place.
Philokalia (Vol. 1 p 100) cautions,
"Do not pray for fulfillment of your wishes, for they may not accord with the will of God; but pray saying, 'Thy will be done in me".
Prayer of simple love and reverence elevate the mind Godward. Addition of a request for earthly favour pollutes the prayers, and lowers the mind to the earthly level.

## Section 48 **DEVOTION**

**Devotion (Bhakti in Sanskrit) is intense love to God**. We noted that reverence shown to gods or other minor deities are mostly, not expressions of love to them, but are emotional efforts to attain some worldly benefits for self. Even a veneration to God, if it is motivated by a desire to be fulfilled, will not be an expression of love to God, but only a ceremonial supplication of the desire. **Plain pure love, flowing Godward, alone will be Devotion**.

When thinkers understood God as the Cosmic Soul, and their own Souls to have arisen as tiny fragments diffused from God, they felt a sublime filial love and reverence to God. The knowledge that God is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe and Protector of all beings, endeared Him further. Thus arose an intense love to God, which is called devotion. As worldly love binds Soul to Soul, devotion binds the Soul to God.

**A notable feature of pure love is its having no motive to make a material benefit out of it.** It is an emotion that simply excites mind and Soul towards the beloved. Love's excitement is always to be near about, or to be in communion with, the beloved. Its stimulus is to render servies to the beloved. Even a mundane lover does not anticipate a return or reward for service rendered to his beloved. Are there not cases in which a girl or a youth, loved by one, married another; and, long thereafter, came to be saved from a great peril by the selfless service of the rejected lover? Any benefaction by the beloved may gladden the lover to the utmost; but the lover will not anticipate or yearn for it. It is likewise and more, with devotion. A true devotee will never think of making a profit out of his devotion, or make a prayer to God for any worldly favour; however miserable his circumstances may be. Only joyful songs of pure praise of God will be his communication to God. He will only praise and worship God as his highest ideal, and will abhor the idea of impelling Him to do favours to him.

**Love manifests in reverence**. Everything that belongs to the beloved is sacred to a worldly lover. It is so with the spiritual lover also. The normal reverence that is felt towards temples, holy places, priests, religious teachers, etc. are all manifestations of love to God, extended to things connected with Him. Reverence shown to scriptures in all religions, is also a manifestation of man's inherent love to God.

Another feature of love is the special **delight** the lover feels on a visualization of the beloved in the mind. When a devotee talks or sings praises to God with thought of God in his mind, the waves of his Soul become stirred so much that tears of devotion will gush down his cheeks, or horripilations will cover his body. In that ecstasy, the devotee may forget everything else, and dance in utter delight.

**Intense love tends to become single-tack**. It tends to converge and concentrate on one object. Convergence of all love on one object intensifies the love. Admitting different objects to the love is to share the love between those different objects. It is said that Hanuman, who was devoted to Rama, once expressed:
"Krishna and Rama may be manifestations of the same God; still, my all is Rama alone". So, when he prostrated before Krishna, he visualized Rama in Krishna's place, and thought he was prostrating to Rama. That was a clear display of single track devotion. Such an attitude causes consistency, constancy and concentration in devotion.

An ardent devotee may adopt, and visualize always a single form to God for his venerations; whatever be the place where he renders the veneration. To think of God in different personal forms, is to cause the mind to change frequently its conception of the form of God. When an ardent devotee adheres to one Personal God, that is to say, to one definite form for his visualization of God, and goes on visualizing God in that one form constantly at all worships, his mental image of God in that form becomes more and more vivid. Soon he reaches a stage of experiencing a vivid mental vision of that form as soon as he closes eyes in thought of God, and experiencing a subtle delight on such visions. Then his devotion is said to become single track, and the form he visualizes for God is called his **Chosen Ideal** (Ishta devata). Thereafter, when he visits another place where a different form is installed to represent God, and worships God on the form there, without visualizing God in the form of his Chosen Ideal, his mind is constrained to deviate from its habitual conception of God in the form of the Chosen

Ideal and to conceive Him in a different form. It compels mind to shift from form to form. His ardent adherence to the form of Chosen Ideal may get confused or divided between the two forms. On the other hand, if he did firmly look upon the form or image of God as a mere representation, he could well have thought of God in the form of his Chosen Ideal being present there also, in the place of the image at the sanctuary there, and could have offered worship, or understood the worship being done there, as done on his Chosen Ideal form so imagined by him. In short, he could well have done as Hanuman did before Krishna. That would have added strength to his adherence to the Chosen Ideal and to his habitual mode of worship. Frequent transplantations may not help growth of a plant; frequent transplantations of God's image may not help development of devotion either. Constancy and consistency in single-track devotion are apt to intensify the devotion to God.

**Visiting centres of pilgrimage is good for a devotee**. The atmosphere about the sanctuary there, will be full of resonance of subtle waves of godly thoughts, praises of God, and sacred hymns from thousands of devotees who had prayed there. Any devotee visiting the spot will imbibe the pious excitement of those collective waves there. That is the sanctity of the place – the spiritual force that stirs there. If the devotee can visualize God, in the form of his usual contemplations, as present at the holy of holies there, it will add commendable spiritual force to his devotion. Hence it is that pilgrimages are commended in all religions.

A devotee may visit any place of worship – a temple, church, mosque, synagogue, or any other house of God and observe single-track devotion. God is one only, everywhere. Whatever be the name and form of God's house at the place, and whatever be the name and form of His representation there, it does not matter; he bows to God who is everywhere. What matters really is his remembrance of God. It is best done in the form in which he is used to visualize Him. Habit becomes part of one's nature; so the form in which a person habitually visualizes God becomes a natural form of God for him. Visualizing God in that way, if he offers worship at the new place, it will be a commendable devotional observance, which will stabilize his rememberance of God. Group worship has its own advantages because of the surge of subtle waves of devotional thoughts and songs from the persons present there. Every devotee can partake of it with advantage.

**Devotion leads to true knowledge of God**. Quran (7:157) describes Mohamed as a "Prophet who could neither read, nor write"; but he had, by devotion, attained the knowledge which has guided millions for centuries.

Bhagavad Gita (10:10, 11) says,
"Those who always meditate on God and joyfully worship Him, God provides the wisdom by which they will attain Him. Out of compassion for them, God, who abides as (cosmic) soul, destroys the darkness of their ignorance, with the effulgent lamp of knowledge."
Conversely, the Tripadvibhuti Mahanarayana Upanishad (8:4) observes
"Without devotion, the spiritual knowledge will never arise". (Bhaktya vina, brahmajnanam Kadapi na jayate).
Philokalia (Vol. 2 p 120) also observes

"A soul can never attain the knowledge of God unless God Himself in His condescension takes hold of it and raises it unto Himself…and illumines it with rays of divine light."
To get God's grace, the aspirant must be sincerely devoted. To those who think that beyond the material world, nothing worthy exists, God will be a myth; and wealth, power and sex will be the supreme ideals in life. They cannot attain knowledge of God. Love of God (devotion) alone will lead to knowledge of what and who God is in reality, says Bhagavad Gita (11:54, 18:55).
Philokalia (Vol. 3 p 148) observes,
"The more he praises God, the more becomes his knowledge of God."
Conversely, love, without true knowledge of the beloved, will be shallow or superficial. It is so with the divine love also. Devotion will get strengthened and deep rooted only with true knowledge of God. **Devotion leads to knowledge and knowledge strengthens and intensifies devotion.**

**Devotion is inherent in every man**; because, **all beings bear an affinity to their source**, and God is the source of the essential being (the Soul) in every man. As all religions are based on belief in a universal Supreme Power, whom most religions call God, man's universal love for religion is virtually an indication of his inherent affinity to God. Equally inherent in man is the counter-potency of self-consciousness or Ego. Attachment to God will weaken the Soul's regard for Ego; therefore Ego will constantly allure the Soul away from Godly thoughts, with the prospects of easily procurable worldly enjoyments. Even before the inherent affinity to God can make the slightest appearance in a child, Ego will take hold of him and urge him to assert self-interests over the interests of his siblings and others. Bodily needs, and needs of action in the form of play, will support the urge of Ego for selfness, in the child. Thus, Ego will be prompt to suppress the Soul's affinity to God, even from the beginning of life. Hence, a stimulus from outside becomes often necessary to excite the inherent love to God. Hearing stores of God's glories, seining images, pictures, or the like representations of God, attending venerations offered to God, reciting hymns, singing names of God, etc. can provide the requisite stimulus. Those who do not get such stimulus during childhood are apt to become settled in selfishness and ego. Those who get such stimulus frequently in their childhood, easily develop in the love of God. The inspirations of past Karmabhavas count a lot in this regard. Ultimately, those who succumb to Ego, venerate mammon as the supreme power of the world, and dedicate their lives to indulge in wealth, power, sex, etc. On the other hand, those who hold devotion as sacred, venerate God, and indulge in worship of God, and dedicate themselves to piety, charity, humility and similar virtues.

Finally, **devotion leads to attainment of God.**
Philokalia says,
"It is possible for man to attain union with God". (ibid Vol. 1 p 348)
"Love leads and guides towards God and unites men with Him". (ibid Vol. 2 p 170)
Atmopanishad (22-23) says that just as on destruction of an earthen pot the air enclosed in it unites with the air in the atmosphere, on dissolution of the Subtle Body, the Soul in it will unite with the Cosmic Soul, the God. But, it is open to a Soul, who has attained the highest spiritual elevation, to continue without such merger and then it will have all the powers of God, except the power of Creation and Absorption of the universe, (vide Brahmasutras 4:4:8-17).

It is said that before attainment of God, the devotee may see God clearly in a form of his own choice – not a mere visualization, but an actual vision. Several have said it impossible to see God; several others have said positively that God can be seen just as clearly as we see each other; each may be telling his experience which accords with his spiritual attainments. We have observed (sect. 1 above) that the discarnate Souls of deceased relatives are seen as identifiable apparitions by many persons close to death. The incidents connected with James Chaffin and Lady Barrett's patient (cited in sect. 1 above) are telling in this regard. If discarnate Souls can be seen as identifiable apparitions, it cannot be an impossibility to see God as well. Hagiographies of men who had seen God tell that, even in their young days, they had exhibited spiritual attainments of a high order, which cannot be traced to any work in the current life. It shows that in their vision of God, they were continuing the attainments they had worked out in prior life. (cf. Bhagavad Gita 6:40-45).

Bible says hat Jacob say God face to face (Gen 32:30) and also that Moses and his companions saw God at Mt. Sinai (Ex 24:9-11). Indian Puranas also tell that Prahlada and Markandeya saw God face to face. Christ told people, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they can see God". (Mat 5:8).
Bhagavad Gita (8:14) tells,
"Whoever constantly thinks of God, without distraction, to such a staunch devotee God is readily available (sulabha).

In recent times, Sri Ramakrishna (1836-1886), Guru of Swami Vivekananda, through his unique devotion, had materialized the vision of God. His hagiography "Sri Ramakrishna The Greater Master" reports that, at the age of 20, he became the priest of the Kali Temple at Dakshineswar, and soon thereafter he became eager to have an actual vision of the Deity, that, after the regular rituals of worship, he used to pray, and pray long, for Her vision, with tears gushing down his cheeks, and that, one day (in 1856) his anguish became so unbearable that he determined to end the life that would not enable him to see the Deity, and, like mad with despair, he took the sword that was beside the image, when suddenly he saw "a boundless luster of Consciousness" with the Holy Mother, Kali, at its centre, and fell unconscious (ibid 2:5:9; 2:6:12,13). Then he began to pine for "constant immediate vision of the Divine Mother's form", and attained that too, and used to see "the full figure of the effulgent Mother, smiling and speaking, and guiding him" (ibid 2:7:4). He was well aware that the Deity was not the image he worshipped. If it was the image there was no need for him to pine for its vision. He knew the Deity was only the All-Embracing Being of Consciousness (ibid 2:5:10, 11; 2:6:7); but he firmly believed that the Deity can assume a visible form and appear to a devotee and guide him as the Almighty Mother to him. So, he prayed to see the Deity and achieved it to the full. Because of his consciousness that God is one only for all in the universe, he wanted to see if the disciplines of the other religions also would lead him to similar God-visions. In 1866, he practiced Islam, under a Sufi dervish, and realized Allah before him, in the form of "an effulgent impressive personage with a long beard" (ibid 2:16:9-12). In 1874, he meditated on Jesus for 3 days and materialized His vision as "a marvelous god-man of very fair complexion", with a very beautiful face, and long eyes, coming towards him, firming looking at him, who then embraced him, and vanished into his body, whereupon he became unconscious for some time (ibid 2:21:3, 4). In the light of such experiences he used to say "All religions are true – as many faiths, so many paths:, (ibid 2: app: 23; 4:4:44).

Methods may be different; languages may be different; but at the core all religions have the same goal – to reach God.

When Narendra (early name of Swami Vivekananda) visited him first, with his companions, Sri Ramakrishna told them
"God can be seen and spoken with, just as I am seeing you and speaking with you; but who wants to do so? People grieve and shed potfuls of tears at the death of their wives and sons, and behave in the same way for the sake of money or property; but who does so because he cannot realize God? If any one is really equally anxious to see Him and calls on Him, He certainly reveals Himself to him". (ibid 5:3:9)

**Devotion is said to be the natural, pleasant easy and quickest means to attain God**. It is natural because man has an innate affinity to God as the source of his Soul, and that affinity when properly nourished grows into ardent devotion which will lead to vision and attainment of God. It is pleasant because devotees experience delight when they indulge in any act of devotion, like recital of praises to God, recitation of His names, seeing His images, pictures, or other symbols, and making offerings to Him. Even in times of acute grief, the remembrance of God, or listening to songs of His glories, gives commendable solace. It is easy because devotion does not require any hard practice or harsh discipline. Devotee can express his earnest love to God in any manner he likes; and mere habituation will intensify his devotion. So, devotion is easy to sustain and to develop. Loving God "with all the heart" (which means, without leaving any room in the mind for other thoughts), if a person sings praises to God, his devotion will stir the Soul and become dynamic with spiritual force; he will then experience a passion for God; and horripilations will cover his body or tears will gush down his cheeks. It is a sign of his getting in communion with God. It will cause a radiation of Divine Grace to the devotee. The rise of the Soul towards God will get accelerated; and ultimately, it will lead to attainment of God, or His vision. So the devotion is said to be the quickest means to attain God.

**When devotion rises above the ordinary, the devotee will become conscious of the all pervading nature of God.** Sri Ramakrishna at first hated priesthood in the Kali temple, merely because the temple was made by a queen of the fisher caste, and refused to take Prasada (the remnant of offerings) from that temple even though it was prepared and consecrated by his own brother as the priest there (see Sri Ramakrishna The Great Master 2:4:16, 17). But when he became an earnest devotee, he ate as Prasada even the leavings of food served to the poor folks at that temple and cleansed their plates, saying that they too are existence of God. A devotee's awareness that the all-pervading God is in all beings causes him to see all beings as existence of God, and all happenings, good or bad, as His mysterious plays. That is really the climax of spiritual attainment.

Bhagavad Gita (13: 2/3) says
"Know God as the Soul in all body forms"
Bible (1 Cor 3:16) also exhorts
"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you".
Philokalia (Vol. 1 p 68) also says
"Blessed is the monk who regards every man as God after God".
When a devotee realizes the all pervading God to dwell in all beings, his devotion rises to its supreme state. But, realization is not mere book-knowledge, it is attained only

with a full conviction followed up in sincere practices. Observance in practice is the mark of a full conviction.

Section 49 **PURITY OF MIND**

**Purity of mind is an essential condition of spiritual attainment.** The Brahmabindu Upanishad (1), Maitrayani Upanishad (4:6) etc., define it thus:
"The mind is spoken to be of two kinds – the pure and the impure; that which conceives desires is impure, that which is devoid of desires is pure."

In this verse, 'pure' means **spiritually pure**; and 'desires' mean **worldly desires** – the desires for worldly objects and worldly objectives. Such desires always distract mind and intellect from Godward thoughts, and lead them to earthly concerns. The Bible expresses it curtly, as it says,
"The friendship of the world is enmity with God". (James 4:4)

Generally, a mind that goes after worldly pleasures forgets God. A worldly desire, once entertained, seldom dies or wanes. The more it is entertained, the more it strengthens and rules the man. It is said to be insatiable, like fire which yearns for more and more fuel even as it blazes high (Bhagavad Gita 3:37-39). As its craving never ends, its distraction of mind from Godward thoughts will persist continuously. So, in regard to spiritual concerns, worldly desires are said to be "inimical to God". They are said to pollute the mind with unholy thoughts.

Desires, becoming intense, normally lead to works; and the way the works are done, is said to affect or effect **purity of mind.** Doing a work with desire for results causes **mind's attachment to the work and to earthliness**; that is said to affect adversely the purity of mind. Conversely, doing works without desire on results, keeps the mind unattached and pure.

The common doer thinks that the work is his design, he does the work, the work is his own, and therefore he is entitled to its results or proceeds. It is Ego, the I-and-mine consciousness, that urges him to regard the results as the normal and natural reward for his efforts. It is a display of Ego related to the work. The desire for results or proceeds forms an egoistic interest in the work; it draws the mind strongly to the work, and causes a sort of identification of mind with (the execution of ) the work. **That is attachment to the work**. On such attachment the mind gets more and more involved in the work, and years for more and more proceeds or pleasures from the work or its recurrences. It tends to forget Godly thoughts, to forget justice to others, to ignore the demerits in the work, to ignore spiritual welfare, and so on. **Thus it pollutes the mind.**

Therefore, Bhagavad Gita (5:11) observes,
"For the sake of purity of mind, the yogis do works with the body, mind, intellect, or even with the sense-organs, without attachment (to the work)".

In practice, there is not much difference in the manner of doing a work by an enlightened yogi or by an unenlightened commoner; both perform their works in the same manner (Bhagavad Gita 3:25); the difference is in their mental attitude towards the work and its results. The yogi, for the sake of purity of mind, does his work without attachment, i.e. in an attitude of perfect non-attachment or detachment; the common

man does his work with mind attached to the work. Desire for results or proceeds causes the attachment to the work. By rejecting all desires and thoughts on results, the yogis keep their minds unattached to the works they do.

When desire for results is given up, the doer will not feel any attachment to the work. He does the work for the sake of work; he has no further objectives. He may get benefited by its results, or he may not; but he does not think about it. **The unattached doer thinks it his duty to do the works that arise in the normal way for his performance.** He may regard the works as inspirations from God, which he has to carry out. He does his duty; and there his concern in the work ends. If results come to his benefit in the normal way, he accepts them. If results miss him, let them go their own way; he does not worry about their non-receipt. The omniscient Ruler of the Universe may have His own design in inspiring him to do the works; he cannot know His aims or understand His mysterious ways of maintaining the world. So, he does not think of results of works. He does not exult on receipt of a benefit, nor languish when it is missed. Bhagavad Gita calls such an ingenious manner of doing works as a yoga, the Karmayoga (ibid 2:48, 50). It keeps the mind free of egoistic attachments, free of worldly worries. It keeps the mind pure.

## Section 50 **KARMAYOGA**

The excellence of Bhagavad Gita is in its exposition of karmayoga. It expounds Karmayoga as the sacred way of doing all works. The gist of that exposition occurs as **three negative instructions in the verse 2: 47**, which reads,
"Your right is only to (do) a work, never to results; Do not become cause for fruits of action; nor shall your inclination be to inaction."

The first instruction is to renounce expectations on results of works. One must do all works that normally arise for performance; but the intent in doing the works shall only be their execution, and not the earning of their results or proceeds for self.

Swami Vivekananda (vide his Complete Works, Vol. 1 p 245) observed,
"All our works now, are the effects of past Samskaras."

But, we do not know the identity of the Samskara (Karmabhava) that inspires the present act. If the Karmabhava that inspires the present act, involves an undischarged obligation incurred in a prior life, its inspiration will be to discharge that old obligation by the present act. In that case, the result or proceeds of the present act must go to the person who is the old creditor or his reincarnation; and the doer will not have any return for his present act – not even a show of gratitude by the recipient who gets only what has long been due to him. His past action or karma secures it now to him; the doer's past act causes him now to furnish it to the former. Here obviously the doer's right is only to do the work, and not to have its results or proceeds. If, in ignorance of the old obligation, the doer expects a normal return for his present work, he will surely fail; if then he becomes depressed, he is only worrying over the loss of a mirage. Since men do not remember their past lives and therefore do not know which acts are in discharge of prior obligations and which acts re not so, Bhagavad Gita tells not to expect results of any act or work, but be content with whatever comes in the natural course to benefit self. It expresses "Your right is only to the karma, never to results".

To avoid desires for results, Bhagavad Gita (3:20,25) suggests all works to be done as a service to benefit others (lokasamgraham). As a rough illustration, Swami Vivekananda points out that a cook preparing food does his work with intent to benefit others, and not self, though part of it may enure to his benefit (see his Complete Works Vol. 5 p 248). Likewise if all works are done without thought of self, it would become Karmayoga.

Another reason is also said in support of the above said proposition. God the Lord, as the sustainer of the universe, looks to the ultimate good of the world (Bhagavad Gita 4: 7,8) and to that end, He designs works, which He executes through His creatures (ibid 18:61). God's works may be of a universal nature. Man does not grasp their universality, unless he is able to visualize God's Universalism. Sages conceive every work to be a part of God's design of some universal action. Man does not know the expanse or reaches of that universal action, except only the small part of it within his vision. With his knowledge of that small part, he cannot grasp the scope of the vast universal action of God. A blind man who touches the trunk of an elephant can only think that the elephant is a giant leech. Results are to follow the whole action; so they belong to Him who arranges the whole action, i.e. God, and must go as He wills. Hence the enlightened man consecrates all his acts or works to God, and does them all as an agent of God. So, to him belongs only the execution of works; the results are God's.

When the egoistic Arjuna thought his fight with his wicked cousins was his own act, and that in the fight he had to destroy all the men who were to help his cousins, Krishna showed him that his fight was only a part of God's design for maintenance of order and justice in the world, and that the destruction of men in that fight was God's decree in the affair (Bhagavad Gita 1:35, 11:33, 34). So Krishna urged Arjuna to do his work "as a mere instrument" of God. (Nimittamatram bhava – ibid 11:33). In effect it was a direction to dedicate his work to God, and not to think of its results.

**The second instruction in the verse is, not to cause accrual of fruits of action**, that is to say, not to do works in a way that will give rise to fruits of action, which may accumulate and cause miseries in future life. The doer becomes bound by fruits of action because of his attachment to the action or work. Doing a work with desire for its proceeds or results causes attachment to the work. When the work bears fruits, that attachment will extend to them. So, the doer becomes bound by the fruits of action. To avoid such bondage, all works must be done in complete detachment with them. Remaining unconcerned with results is detachment with the work.

Normally the doer thinks that he desires a particular objective, and does the work to gain that objective. He does the work because of his desire to enjoy his objective as the result of the work. The desire to enjoy the result causes in him an attachment to the work. As he takes the work to be his own, he owns its merits and thereby becomes bound to enjoy or suffer the ultimate consequences of those merits, the fruits of the work. It is really a bondage to the karma and its fruits. It is a bondage that he brings on himself. It is not the work that causes the bondage, but his desire for results of the work. On the contrary, if the doer takes his works as biddings of God, and does not hold any desire after their results, he will not feel such an attachment to the work, and no fruit of action will fall on him. (cf. Bhagavad Gita 5:10).

It is thoughts that develop into desires, and desires that lead to actions or works. Wherefrom do the thoughts arise? Does our Mind or Intellect generate thoughts, or do they occur naturally in the Mind or Intellect? As we ponder thus, it appears that, when we face problems, Intellect begins to think in the light of past experiences in the life; but, at other times thoughts occur in our Mind spontaneously. Who or what stimulates their arousal? It can only be Karmabhavas excited by the Vital Consciousness. We have noted (Sect. 8 above) that Vital Consciousness is Sagunabrahman or Impersonal God. It follows that all All-pervading God is behind all our thoughts, desires, and actions.

The Bhagavad Gita (18:61) observes,

"God dwells in the heart centre of all beings, alluring them, through the primal Nature, to work like robots."

If God instigates man's actions, they are virtually God's biddings to him. The author of the work is God, and man the doer is only an instrument carrying out His biddings.

We observed that all our works are inspired by Karmabhavas-in-bloom (p. 49-50 above) and that Karmabhavas bloom at the will of God (p. 54 above). In other words, God inspires actions through manipulations of the blooming of Karmabhavas. So, our actions are mentioned to be God's biddings. If works are done as biddings of God, they become virtually God's works. The man, who executes the works as an agent of God, cannot foster any desire for self on their results or proceeds. He will leave the results or proceeds of works to God's disposal, and will not have any thought after them. He will then be free of attachment to the works, and will always remember God. All his works will then become consecrated services, or a sort of offerings, to God. Bhagavad Gita (18:46) says

"Worshipping with his works Him who pervades the whole universe and from whom (are) the works of beings, man attains perfection."

When works are done as biddings of God, the doer's mind will always be engaged in devotional communion with God. Even an affliction will then be felt as God's mysterious play, or test; and he will be able to bear it quietly. So, the scriptures direct dedication of all acts to God – to give all heart to God, and hands alone to the work. Scriptures direct,

"Whether therefore you eat, drink, or whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God." (Bible, 1 Cor 10:31)

"Whatever you do, enjoy, sacrifice, donate, or observe as a vow, dedicate them all to God." (Bhagavad Gita 9:27)

All works will then become acts of worship; even eating will become a service to God dwelling within the body; helping another will become a service to God dwelling within his body; and so on. (cf. Mat 25:35-45). Everything will become an offering to the all-pervading God.

Bhagavad Gita declares,

"Whoever does his works without attachment and in dedication to God, is not affected by their merits, as a lotus leaf (is not affected) by water." (ibid 5:10)

"The yogi, by giving up (desire for) results of works, attains supreme peace of mind; the non-yogi, by doing works with desire for results, becomes attached to and bound by their fruits." (ibid 5:12)

Doing all works, without attachment and in dedication to God, will, not only avoid fruits of action, but will also lead to constant remembrance of God, an effective renounciation of ego, a sense of brotherhood with all, and universal love.

It is fruits of past actions that are now experienced as pleasures and miseries in the life. So, avoiding fruits of action is avoiding both pleasures and miseries. One may like to avoid miseries, and court pleasures; but that is impossible, because pleasures and miseries are so inseparably linked together. Between them, the pangs of miseries affect men much deeper and longer than the thrills of temporal pleasures. The sharpness of pain caused by miseries is not comparable to the flitting sweetness of worldly pleasures. It is like experiencing -5 and +2. So, an absence of both miseries and pleasures, is deemed more covetable than having both. Vedantic philosophy regards absence of miseries as bliss or 'Ananda'. Hence the advice in the above verse to avoid formation of all fruits of action.

**Thirdly, the verse inhibits any inclination to inaction**. The preceding instruction, to avoid fruits of action, should not be taken as a sanction to refrain from action itself. Nor is inaction a shortcut to avoid desires for results. Bhagavad Gita condemns inaction, and urges constant engagement in works that arise in a normal way.

Actions or works are part and parcel of the life. None can ever remain, even for a moment, without doing some work, with the body, or with the mind; it is impossible for embodied beings to abandon works completely (Bhagavad Gita 18:11). It is foolish o pursue the impossible; and it will be wise indeed to do what one is bound to do, as best as one can. So, Bhagavad Gita directs,
"Be always doing work; (abiding in) action is superior to inaction (ibid 3:8)
"Do not shirk a work arising in a normal way even if it involves as aspect of harm; because every work involves some harm, like smoke in a fire." (ibid 18:48)

No work that naturally arises for instant performance shall be shirked. In Mahabharata (Vanaparvam, chap. 205-215) an active butcher expounds high philosophy to a Brahmin. When the Brahmin asked him at the close of his speech, why such a great philosopher lived the ugly life of a butcher, he replied, no work is ugly or impure; it has its part in the sustenance of the world. Butchery was the work he was called upon to do; his birth in a family of butchers placed him in such a predicament that in boyhood he had to learn the trade as the means of family livelihood. He was doing that work as house holder, rendering a service to men who want meat for food; but he had no attachment to the work. He does the work as God's bidding to him. That say of the butcher accords with an ideal way of life – **be unattached, and do every work that arises to be done, thinking it to be God's bidding to self**.

As works normally arise from one's own Karmabhavas, shirking a work may be evading discharge of an unknown old obligation involved in the Karmabhava, or attempting to obstruct the fruition of the Karmabhava. As the Karmabhavas bloom at the will of God, the shirking of work may even be attempting to thwart the God's will; or, it may be denying one's own natural obligation to contribute to the general welfare of the world. In the way we live, we take ample benefit of works done by others. The food we eat, the clothes we wear, the education we have, the vehicles we use, the house we live in, etc. all are the results of other's works. Non conscientious man can think it is one-way traffic to his benefit. When we take benefit of other works, we must also

work for the benefit of others, the generality of men. Inaction on our part, will be a negation of that obligation. So, Gita urges all to do all works that arise in a normal way, and forbids any inclination to inaction.

Observance of the above said three instructions constitute Karmayoga. It will ensure purity of mind and purity of action, and will cause definite spiritual elevation.

Section 51 **GODWORSHIP**

We noted above (page 74) that the early men, who were astounded by various phenomena of nature, thought them to be works of celestial persons called gods, who could promote or ruin man's welfare on Earth. They wanted to avoid any displeasure of the gods. They conceived that the gods, being superhuman, knew the thoughts of men, and would come, on invocation, to any clean place reserved for them, and accept tasteful offerings, and would, if well pleased, render favours to the worshipper. Chandogya Upanishad (3:6:1) says that gods are gratified with offerings. It observes, "Indeed, the gods neither eat, nor drink, but they are gratified by seeing, smelling, etc." (cf. also p 61 above; and Gen. 8:21.)

The ancient worshippers used to prepare clean elevated spots to receive the gods and to make offerings to them on auspicious days. When the offerings were repeated from time to time at a particular spot, it came to be looked upon as sacred to the god; and a special sign, like a post or a plant, was put up close to it to mark it from the surroundings. When neighbors also came to offer worship to that god at that spot, it assumed more importance, and the sign of its identity was made more conspicuous with decorations, like flags or wooden bars put across or like a trident. Later that sign came to be regarded as an emblem of the god who was being worshipped there. When the sign, originally meant to identify the spot, was elevated to the status of an emblem of god visiting the place, the idea arose of making it representative of the personal identity of the god. As the god was conceived to be a heavenly person, an imposing image of personal form, made of clay, baked a beautifully painted, came to be installed at the spot of worship. It was then experienced that offerings made before such a symbolic image stimulated a greater consciousness of the god's presence, and dynamised the faith in the worship to a greater extent than before. Also, when offerings were made to a god before such image, the worshipper felt a sublime gratification in the action which was almost like a feeling of having made it to the go directly. So, worship of gods before such images became popular among the ancient nations. People were particular to have the images in perfect figures in order to have pleasant remembrances of the gods excited by them. Whenever a little damage happened to a clay image, they would immediately remove it and install another faultless fresh image there and consecrate it to the god as early as was possible. Piles of abandoned images, once used at worships, but got slightly damaged later, can be seen even now in some abandoned village sites. As time advanced and worships at a spot came to be done more frequently, and the number of worshippers attending the ceremonies for worship increased, roofed edifices came to be put up, and beautiful images, carved of wood and painted, came to be installed in those temples. Such symbolic images were called idols of the gods. Usually they were made more impressive with decorations of garlands before worships commenced. Later, idols came to be made of more lasting materials like stone or rustproof metal. By that time, rites and rituals for worships, and formulae of hymns for prayers for gaining favours, became settled by habitual usage. Ceremonial worships

also developed in the course of time. So much so, in the early Samhita-and-Brahmana-portions of the Vedas, we find descriptions of many rituals and hymns for seeking favours of gods, like Indra, Varuna and Mitra. (cf. Bible, Lev. Chap. 1-10). Obviously, **the idols are symbolic representations of invisible gods, and the rituals are symbolic expressions of reverence to the gods**. They are to concretize the consciousness and adoration of the gods. In fact, every child gets his first ideas about a god by watching the rituals and listening to the hymns. It is only when he has grown spiritually that he understands God as the all-pervading Divinity or Supreme Being.

When spiritual concept advanced, from gods the heavenly persons, to God the omnipresent Being, the ritual of worship and the use of images came to be extended to the latter. As God was mentioned to be a formless abstract entity, ordinary men felt very difficult to comprehend Him. We find young children feeling difficult to understand arithmetic's of numbers when they are explained to them in the abstract; but when they are explained with marbles or dice, they understand them easily, and learn to count, to add and subtract, and to multiply and divide the number so quickly. Marbles and dice are symbolic objects used to concretize the numbers. When the children have mastered the numbers they discard the marbles and dice, and do all arithmetic in the abstract. It is likewise in religion also. Men in the early stages of spiritual knowledge require some concrete presentation of God to stimulate His visualization at contemplations and to represent Him at worships. But, unlike gods who are heavenly persons, the God has no form of which an image is possible. As the ancient thinkers pondered to solve this difficulty, they thought of worshipping invisible gods through images, and adopted the same method to the worship of the formless God also. They ascribed **a symbolic body form to God for purposes of contemplation and worship**, and made statues of that body form as His idols.

St. Theodoros describes the use of material images, thus:
"It has to be said that the energy of the intellect is blunted by being joined and mingled with the body. As a result it cannot have direct contact with intelligible forms, but requires, in order to apprehend them, the imagination, which by nature uses images, and shares in material extension and density. Accordingly the intellect, while in the flesh, needs to use material images in order to apprehend intelligible forms". (Philokalia Vol. 2 p. 39)
The Bible says
"Whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it and by Him that dwelleth therein". (Mat. 23:21)
This verse mentions a temple as a sacred dwelling of the omnipresent God. It then follows, by the same logic, that an idol or a statue in the temple can well be regarded as a particular habitation of God for symbolic worships.

As the images are creations of man, Indian philosophy accords liberty to individuals to have any image or form of their liking to represent God for their worships. Several forms based on Puranic legends, like Vishnu, Siva, Durga, etc., have thus come in vogue in early India. The form adopted by an individual for his worships is said to be his "Chosen Ideal" (Ishta devata). Though any form may be equally good to represent God for one's venerations, sages have advised every devotee to stick to one Chosen Ideal, one image, one spot, one ritual, etc. for his regular worship (upasanas), because habit forms part of one's nature. Every act of worship forms its own Karmabhava, and Karmabhavas of the same effect gather together to intensify and cause stronger

impulses. So, when a devotee reaches his habitual place of worship and sees the image there, an impulse naturally arises in his mind to offer worship to God. A change in the image or the manner of worship, may be felt as dislocation that disturbs his habitual trend of mind. That is why in the organized religions like Christianity, one symbol, one ritual, one prayer etc. are prescribed for all; and that has worked positive spiritual and social effects. Bible describes God as the Father sitting on a throne of Sapphire (Ezek. 1:26, Mat. 23:22) with the Son on His right (Col. 3:1). All Muslims are directed to turn to the direction of the Kaabah at Mecca and prostrate to God in that direction. Individual liking has no place there. Because of the liberty in Hinduism to have a Chosen Ideal of individual liking several persons think that the Indian religion allows polytheism. They forget that name and form are only what man ascribes to God for the convenience of his offering venerations to God, but God is one only in all names and forms (See sect. 45 above) Rig Veda (1:164:46) particularly says,
"That which exists is One; Worshippers call Him by various names".
But, in practice it often appears that discipline works better than unrestricted liberty.

We noted also that in the early stages of spiritual consciousness, men worshipped gods and concluded their worships with express prayers for benefactions. Though the worships of gods first arose out of a desire to avoid their harmful displeasures, the thought that the same gods, if well propitiated, could also promote welfare, induced the worshippers to pray for benefactions at the conclusion of worships. As the gods were conceived to preside over particular phenomena, the prayer to a god invariably concerned a phenomenon under his control.

The gods were conceived as invisible superhuman personages. But, they had no powers of creation. Nor were they omnipresent, though they could reach any place instantaneously on invocation. (cf. Life After Life, p. 46, on movements of discarnate souls). The gods had no control over Karmabhavas or reincarnations. As they were a kind of beings superior to mankind, they were looked upon with awe and fear, and their worship was an attempt to propitiate them. Such was the early relation of men with gods.

Later, when **God** came to be understood as the Overlord of the entire universe and all gods and all the frightening phenomena, He was first conceived as a Supergod and worshipped in much the same mode as was used in the worship of gods, with prayers for benefactions at the conclusion of every worship.

It was only when God was realized to be the Universal Power of Consciousness, and all Souls to have emerged from Him that men began to regard Him as their Progenitor. God was no more an alien; He is of the ancestral lineage to everyone. He is the Father Protector of all. Awe and fear shown to gods became irrelevant in regard to God. A sense of sublime filial affection and loving reverence to God came to prevail. Worshippers began to think that, as a parent would look after the welfare of a child without any request from the child, so would God also look after the welfare of devotees, and that, as a parent know much better than the child what was ultimately the best for the child, God knew what was really good to the devotee, and therefore **it would be better and safer to have everything to the will of God than to formulate our requirements and make particular requests to Him.** Thus arose the notion of devotion, which is pure love and reverence to God, unmixed with prayers for benefactions.

When a person understands the glory of God and habitually meditates on Him, he would feel an attachment to God. To the extent he feels attachment to God, he becomes detached from Ego and egoistic temptations. He becomes disinclined to crave for the fleeting worldly comforts. His worship of God will then become free of desires to be fulfilled; it will become a pure expression of intense love and reverence to God. Worship then becomes a divine function. While a ceremonial worship done with a desire for benefaction of God, ranks only with ordinary efforts to earn material benefits, a quiet worship without any desire behind it, ranks as a pure divine function.

When a person becomes wholly God minded, h will dedicate his all to God. Every act of his will be in dedication to God, will be in the service of God. Even his eating will be as a sacred offering to the God dwelling within him as his Soul, and not as a provision to nourish his body. Doing any service to another will be as a service to the God dwelling in him, and not as a fvour extended to him. Such an attitude towards all works will ensure, not only a constant remembrance of God, but also a sense of brotherhood with all men, a universal love. All acts will then become sacred venerations of God in his all-pervading reality. His contemplations on God will then become sublime communions with God. (cf. Synthesis of Yoga by Sri Aurobindo p. 73-74).

**In God worship, the main item is communion with God**, though it is attained only in a high state of devotion. It is attained through undistracted meditation and abject surrender of self to God, with a pure mind, a mind cleansed of all desires. One may enjoy the world as it comes to him in the natural course, but not yearn after it – be content and happy with whatever comes in the natural course, and always keep the mind set on the all pervading God. Heartfelt recitals of praise to God, with tears of devotion gushing down the cheeks, excite the Soul to rise Godward. Praising God or singing His glories, does not mean a belief that God is fond of praise, it is done as the effective practical means to suppress our Ego and to avert other thoughts. The sublime power of songs to stir up devotion and to charm and hold the mind in continuous visualization of God is remarkable. Pure delightful prayers of praise to God will raise the mind in constant attachment or adherence to God. In this regard, desires are anti-forces that distract the mind away from God. A fervent prayer for gratification of a just desire may be heard by God; but it will not make a 'communion' to God. A person ringing the bell of complaints at the gate of a palace may get redress, but not an intimacy with the king. **Only a soulful prayer unstained by any desire, a devout visualization, and a joyful unbroken flow of mind towards God, will make a communion with God**. Such meditations and prayers will calm down worldly passions. When they become a habit, they will eschew all worldly cravings from the mind. The mind then becomes pure, prayers become pure, life becomes bliss. Experienced sages say that his devotion then becomes dynamic with a spiritual force. When such dynamic devotion rises high, it stirs the Soul with a passion for God, and that invokes Divine Grace on the devotee. It is a real communion with God. When the whirling waves of the Soul become laden with a passion for God, the spreading waves emanating from them will carry that passion to the whirling waves of Sagunabrahman and excite them to react as Divine Grace to the devotee. It is said that the devotee then attains whatever he thinks, without any solicitation to God for favour.

Bhagavad Gita (4:11) tells that, in whatever manner men approach God, in the same manner will God receive them. If a person approaches God for accomplishment of a desire, God may hear his prayer and bless it. With it the potency of his approach to God ends. On the other hand if his approach is to surrender his all to God, the God also will give Himself in service to him without a stint, without solicitation. Bhagavad Gita (9:22) declares

"Whoever remember God always and joyfully worship Him without thinking anything else, their welfare will be borne by God".

Purana exemplifies that, when devout Kuchela of starving poverty was before Krishna, he thought only of devotion to Krishna as an Incarnation of God, and did not think of his burning miseries; but Krishna himself took care of his welfare and redressed his poverty before he reached back home. (Bhagavatham 10:81).

## Section 52 **SYMBOLS**

Though God is everywhere, He remains in such a way that His omnipresence does not excite God-consciousness in the common man. Being always amidst worldly attractions, his mind always gambols among those attractions. So, the common man requires something to excite his God-consciousness and to hold his mind tethered to the remembrance of God during God worships.

We noted (p. 74, 87) that the early men began to worship gods presiding over particular phenomena in nature. They invoked the presence of gods at spots specially cleansed for the purpose, placed their offerings there, and supplicated their desires to the invisible gods. Later they began to install beautiful personal images to represent the god, and to make offerings and prayers to gods before such images. Though the images were understood to be only symbols, the ancient men were particular to keep them flawless, to cause a pleasant remembrance of the gods concerned. With the institution of images, rituals for worship came in vogue. Further later, when God came to be worshipped as the Overlord of the entire universe and all the gods, the practice of making offerings and performing rituals before a symbolic image was extended to His worship, and the system continue now as developed from time to time.

Men are accustomed to use symbols for various purposes. Figures are used as symbols to denote numbers, and letters are used to represent speech sounds. Words are used as vocal symbols to express ideas in the mind. Different nations used different symbols for identical purposes. Different nations employ different words to represent the same idea. Likewise, images came to be used as visual symbols of the invisible Divinity, and different images are used by different people to represent God who is the same for all. The symbol for God need not be an image of personal form; it may be any accepted symbol that evokes or reminds consciousness of God. **Any symbol whose sight readily evokes a reverential remembrance of God is good for the purpose. The goodness or efficacy of a symbol may not be the same to all; it may be very good for some, but nothing for others**. If a symbol excites reverential remembrance of God in a person, it is a good symbol for him; if it does not, it is nothing to him. It depends on how his mind reacts to a vision of the symbol. It is just like a word; if it invokes the intended idea in a hearer it is good to him; if it does not, it is nothing to him. Which symbol appeals to whom is a matter of individual feeling, habit, or taste. An idol may appeal to a Hindu, but not to a Muslim; a crucifix may appeal to a Catholic, but not to a Jew; the direction towards Kaabah may inspire a Muslim, but not a Parsee; and so on.

But the efficacy of a chosen symbol to excite remembrance of God in a theist appears common to all. There is no religion which does not prescribe a symbol to evoke remembrance of God to its followers. To the Protestants the Cross is the symbol. To the Jew the ark that contains the Old Testament, with two cherubims on its top, symbolizes the presence of God. To the Muslim, the Kaabah at Mecca which is described as God's house (vide Quran 2:125), is the sacred symbol, and in practice even the direction towards the Kaabah is an inspiring symbol. The Black Stone in the Kaabah is the object of pilgrimage of Muslims all over the world. It is an effective symbol to them. To the Catholic the crucifix is a symbol. Hindus mostly use personal images as symbols to represent God at their places of worship.

There is story that a king, who denounced worship of images or idols, got angry when a man threw some sandal paste at the face of his picture in a glass frame, and asked the minister to jail the man for abusing the king. The minister asked the king, if the king can feel abused when a paste was thrown on the glass that covered the canvass bearing his likeness, why should not a devotee feel the garlanding on an idol as an act of veneration to God. The king repented and declared idols to be good representations at places of worship of the omnipresent God.

Many Hindus use a short pillar like cylindrical stone as a symbol to represent the Personal God Siva. Bible also respectfully refers to the use of a pillar like stone as a representative symbol of God by Jacob the traditional ancestor of the Jewish nation. It narrates that Jacob, during a journey, stayed at Luz for a night, when he used a stone picked up from the place for a pillow, and that, during the sleep he dreamt of God speaking to him. When he rose up the next morning, he thought the spot to be a dwelling of God and set up that stone "for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it" as an offering, and vowed
"This stone, which I have set for a pillar shall be God's house". (Gen. 28:11-22)
Years later, God reminded him of his vow and asked him to go to the place and live there. (ibid 31:13,35:1). Jacob did so. Then
"Jacob set up a pillar in the place where He talked with him, even a pillar of stone; and he poured a drink offering thereon, and he poured oil thereon." (ibid 35:14).

Jacob is said to have seen God face to face (Gen. 32:30); yet he gave offering to God on a representative stone pillar. It seems to be an acknowledgement of the spiritual efficacy of a worship of God on a representative symbol.

The Jews offer worship to God before an ark as a symbol for Him. When David had pitched a tabernacle at Zion and had set the ark at its middle,
"David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the Lord". (2 Sam 6:17).
When Solomon had built the temple at Jerusalem, and the priests brought the ark into the oracle, the holy of holies of the temple,
The king and all Israel with him, offered sacrifices before the Lord". (1 Kings 8:6, 62)
"Before the Lord" in these two verses obviously means before God who is deemed to be present on the top of the ark set there (vide Ex 25:22). Evidently the ark in a synagogue is a symbol, on which God is visualized to be present always. It justifies worship rendered before it to God by a believer.

Idols also are symbols on which God is deemed to be person by the Hindu devotees. In the elaborate ritual consecrating an idol (Pranapratishta), God's presence is expressly invoked by the hymn,
"O God! Remain in this stone; Let this stone be a body to You." (Atharva-veda 1:2:3) Thereafter every ritual or ceremony before the idol is performed in the name of God, and every devotee standing before the idol, in the place of the idol, and praises Him as the all pervading, formless, infinite, Chaitanyarupi, etc. – none of which praises is relevant to the metallic or stone idol. Will anybody say that an idol is omnipresent or all pervading, or is of the form of Chaitanyam (consciousness)? Idol is only an inert metal or stone; the praises are obvious references to the God who is deemed present in or on the idol.

The consecration of a church also seems to be of the same significance. Though "The Christ is all, and in all" (Col. 3:11) at the consecration of a church, the people assembled there visualize Christ's entry into the church and into the holy of holies in the church. Thereafter the church is regarded as a dwelling of Christ, and everyone entering the church visualizes presence of God in the form of Christ at its sanctuary, even at or above the altar, and kneels before Him to express his complete surrender to His will.

Phlokalia (Vol. 1 p. 348) observes,
"If those who worship idols knew and understood in their hearts what they worship, they would not be beguiled away from true reverence".
**If the worshipper remembers that he worships the God, and not the idol as such, the worship on the idol will be a true reverence to God**. If he thinks he is worshipping the idol itself, it is plain stupidity; but the chance for such a vain thought is next to nil. Will anybody garlanding the statue of a national leader at a function, think that he is honouring the statue itself (instead of the past leader)?

Through a drawing on a paper, we visualize a sizeable object. Through a stone or metal image, a devotee visualizes a Personal God, or God in a definite form. The devotee, rendering worship to God on or before the image, ignores the stone or metal, and visualizes God in the form of the image at its place, and makes venerations to Him. He sees God in the image, and not the image as God.

Thus, images, idols, pictures, and other symbols, serve to excite visualization of God. (cf. Jabaladarsana Upanishad 4:59). To speak of and idol or a cross as a mere molten metal or carved wood or stone, is to describe its material, and ignore its essential feature. It is like speaking of a book as a pack of papers stained with ink. Indeed, **the book is a pack of papers stained with ink, but to describe it so, is clearly wrong because it ignores the essential feature of the book, the information it carries** on physics, geography, theology, or a like subject. The book is essentially physics, geography, or theology. We honour a book not for its papers or ink, but for the knowledge it conveys. Likewise idols, images, and other symbols are honoured as conveyors of God-consciousness. When Serenus, Bishop of Marseilles, interdicted use of pictures and images of Jesus and of Mary for adorations at prayers, Pope Gregory the Great (590-604) wrote to him,
"It is one thing to adore a picture, another to learn, through representation in a picture, what is worthy to be adored".

When a clerical council at Constantinople in 754 AD decreed all visible symbols of Christ as blasphemous, the monks and the votaries rose in uproar that ultimately images were restored in Catholic churches everywhere. (See 'In Search Of The Soul' by Bernard Hollander, Vol. 1 p 83).

Idolatry is not worship of a god, or of God, on an idol; it is the worship of an idol itself as a god. Bible describes a typical instance of idolatry to illustrate its vainness:
"The carpenter… heweth down… the oak… burneth part thereof in the fire..he roasteth roast… And the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image; he falleth down up to it, and worshippeth it and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me, for thou art my god". (Is 44:13-17)
Patently it was a ridiculous vain act. Isaiah has also said
"Thus said the Lord… my glory I will not give to another, neither my praise to graven images." (Is 42: 4,8)

The praise appropriate to God was being given to graven images or idols; and Bible forbade it. Idol cannot be a god; it can only be a symbol for a god. The praise should be to the god or to God, and not to the idol. Isaiah lived in the 8$^{th}$ century B.C; his descriptions may relate to the conditions of his time.

Conditions seem to have bettered in Palestine by the time of Jesus. His utterances cited in the gospels or elsewhere in the New Testament, do not refer to idols or to idolatry. Apostle Paul's denial of idolatry in his epistles to Corinthians may refer to persistence of the corrupt practice in the region of Corinth in Greece.

However be that, the fact that in the Middle East for elsewhere, idols were misconceived and misused cannot mean that idols are totally undesirable for all people in all circumstances. Any good thing may become despicable if it is misused; but then condemnation will be justified only against the misuse, and not against the thing itself. **In India, idols are used to excite God-consciousness and to hold the mind fixed in thoughts on God, and devotees before it praise only the all pervading God, and not the idol or its beauty**. The annual ceremonial worships of god Ganesa and goddess Durga by the Hindus are well-known. On those occasions, almost every Hindu performs the ceremonial worship at home also. Clay idols of the concerned god or goddess are lavishly decorated with garlands, and costly ceremonies of worship, with flowers, incense, lights, and sweet offerings, and recitals of praise of the god or goddess, and done before the idols. But when the festival is over, the decorated idols are taken in procession to some river, lake, pond, or sea, and are left in deep water (for the clay to dissolve in the water there). For the next year's celebrations new idols are procured to be treated in the same way. Though the functions are performed with the utmost devotion to the god or the goddess, and as magnificently as the individual can afford, **the ultimate abandonment of the idol in deep water**, without any compunction, makes clear that what he had been venerating in the festival, was not the decorated idol bedecked with garlands, but only the god or the goddess symbolized by it. Idols used to excite and promote devotion at worship, serve a very laudable religious purpose, indeed.

## Section 53 **RELIGION**

**Religion is mainly the knowledge about Soul and God.** It is religion that informs the fundamental fact of man's real personality being, not his body, but the Soul in him. It informs also the eternity of the Soul. Further, it is religion that brings the awareness of the existence of God and His benevolent sustenance of the universe and all the beings in it. It tells particularly of the origin of Soul from God. It explains the relations of Soul with God, and the ways and means (sadhanas) for the Soul to attain God. It details the procedures and practices that lead, step by step, to the attainment of God. As the science of chemistry is learned through careful study of its principles and successful performance of its experiments personally by the student under guidance of an experienced instructor, religion is also learned through careful study of its dogmas and steady performance of its practices under guidance of an experienced preceptor (Guru). Sages said that by such practices, man can develop and brighten his spiritual potentials, and that the bliss that follows their realizations greatly excels all worldly pleasures and lasts permanently.

Every religion has one or more authentic books which crystallize the above said details. The Vedas, the Bible, the Quran, etc. are books of that kind. They are regarded as sacred by the followers of the respective religion, and are generally called scriptures. It is the scriptures that sustain the religion and unify its followers. Most scriptures purport themselves to be words of God, delivered for guidance of mankind. So, the adherents respect them as they respect God Himself. In certain religions, like Judaism, the scripture is venerated as a representative symbol of God, and worship is offered to the presence of God deemed to be on or over the sacred book.

Passages in scriptures should not be deemed inconsistent with one another. Scriptures are meant to impart God-realization or God-consciousness to men who may be of different grades of understandings. Some passages or texts may be intended for the ignorant, some for the men of some knowledge, some for the more advanced in spiritual knowledge, and some for householders, some for the ascetics, and so on. The food cannot be the same to the suckling baby and the vigorous athlete. One cannot suddenly leap to the heights of knowledge; many steps or stages have to be crossed before the summit is attained. Spiritual truths have to be assimilated part by part, stage by stage, from lower truth to higher truth, and from worship of God to worship of a Personal God to worship of all-pervading Impersonal God. Each kind of worship is a step or stage in spiritual advancement. Through the lower forms of worship, the contemplations on God may rise, and they may rise to higher and higher forms; and along with it devotion may develop into true knowledge of God. Scriptures are designed to cover the entire range.

Scriptures acknowledge God as the benign Rule of the entire universe, who s One only for the whole universe. **There cannot be two such Supreme Beings, therefore God is one and the same Entity for all men, for all religions.** But as different nations speak different languages, and use different names for the same object, God is called different names by different nations. Jehovah is the God's name in Bible (Ex 6:3), as Allah is His name in the Quran. The Hindus call Him Easwara, the Zoroastrians call Him Ahura Mazda, and so on. All mean the same Being, the one God who rules the universe and sustains all mankind.

As the passage of time spoils many things in the world, the usage of different names to address the one God, came to cause misunderstandings between men of different

religions. The habitual use of a particular name caused a particular attachment to that name among the generality of its users. Many nations began to assert that the God's real name is what they address Him, and that the God worshipped under a different name by another nation was bogus or false entity. Such an assertion meant that their religion alone was the true religion and all others were false. It led to obstinate sectarianism, perverse bigotry, violent fanaticism, pernicious quarrels, and cruel murders of devoted personnel of either religion. Though they said God is one only, they forgot that He is the common father and sustainer of all mankind. The legendary blind man who touched the trunk of an elephant said that the elephant was like a giant leach, another blind man who touched the animal's leg said the elephant was like a big pillar, the third who touched its ear said the elephant was like a flat winnowing basket, the fourth who touched its tail said the elephant was like a broom with a long stick and so on. They all were right to the extent they knew, but none of them knew the elephant. **Partial knowledge, that is presumed to be the complete knowledge, is a dangerous thing, because the thought that one knows everything, prevents one from acquiring further knowledge.** The knowledge has to grow part by part till it attains perfection. All religions speak of the one God of the universe, **to know what other religions say about Him is to know more and more about Him**.

To think of one's own religion as the only true religion and of all other religions which are different from it as false, is a childish misconception. From the base of a hill on its eastern side, southern side, western side and northern side, different paths exist to the summit of the hill. Though they are different from one another, they all lead to the same goal. To think that my path from a point on the eastern side of the hill leads correctly to the summit and therefore all other different paths from the southern, western or northern side must be false paths is plainly childish indeed. It is likewise with the different religions which provide different paths to attain God, as has been proved positively by Sri Ramakrishna (vide p. 80-81 above). Equally misconceived is the assertion of some persons that they alone are God's men, and all others are aliens to Him. It is an obvious attribution of sectarianism and partiality to the benign Father of all, and a patent betrayal of ignorance of God's all embracing nature.

Till recently, science cared only for the body and its living comforts. It has succeeded to stretch human comforts to the sky. It was religion that concentrated its researches on Soul. As it pondered on what life is, what is its source, from where do inspirations for actions arise, and on similar mysteries, it came to discover a Soul to exist in the body of every living being and to discern its importance. It found the essence of a man's being to be the Soul in him, and that the Soul is an eternal being. The Soul never dies. Even when the body has been burned to ashes, the Soul continues intact, in happiness and vigour. Researchers revealed Soul to be matterless, and to exist as an entity of whirling waves of the power of Pure Consciousness. Swami Vivekananda, in his main speech at the Parliament of Religions, in Chicago, 1893, described the Soul as "a circle whose circumference is nowhere but whose center is located in the body." (Vide his Complete Works, vol. 1, p 9). The whirling waves of Soul remain at a spot, and rotate in high speed. So the Soul is said to exist as a unit of whirling waves that rotate or spin rapidly – millions of million rounds per second. In the unit of whirling wave that remains at a spot, its centre remains stationary and that forms its location; but, as it rotates so speedily, its circumference remains "nowhere", that is nondiscernible. (cf. p. 16-17, 31-32).

Soul manifests consciousness. When it remains in a material body form (as an amoeba, or an elephant, or a whale, or a man) it displays itself as consciousness or life in the being. Dr. Moody's researches (vide, Life After Life) disclosed that even when it is out of body, it exhibits consciousness, and becomes conscious of objects and events around it. Sages found further the existence of an omnipresent Being of Pure Consciousness, working behind every mysterious phenomenon in the universe – like the existence of countless stars, emanation of light and heat from the sun, formation of babies in wombs, occurrence of fortunes and miseries, etc. They realized the identity of that omnipresent Entity of pure consciousness with the enwrapped bit of Consciousness that is a Soul, and inferred the individual Soul to be a fragment diffused from the Cosmic Soul. **Then they began investigations on ways for the Soul to attain the Cosmic Soul; and the discovery of positive ways to attain It is the highest feat of religion.**

The religion of India had considered the natural or inborn inequalities between man and man. Some are born lucky, they rise to positions, and enjoy peace and pleasure; some others are born in misery, they live in wretchedness, and walk to the dungeons or gallows. Sages strained their insight deeper and deeper and found past actions to be the cause of such differences in the conditions, circumstances, and experiences in men's lives. Every action involves two aspects: the outward act yields its consequences forthwith, but the merits of the act take time to yield fruits. Subtler Waves that reflect our karmas in the Subtle Body never die; they only become finer and finer and ultimately become minute whirling waves. The Subtler Waves generated by every action subside as a distinct unit of fine whirling waves in the Interspace of the Subtle Body. They preserve the distinctive character of the action, which includes its merits. When it is time to yield fruits, these fine whirling waves expand are rise up to cause their effects. They cause inspirations for actions and thereby cause our experiences in life. Who gives the signal or the stimulus, to those waves to rise up? It can only be the omnipresent Power of Consciousness that is conscious of all things and controls the universe so mysteriously. The thinkers called the subsiding waves of actions as Karmabhavas, their store as Samchitakarma, their initial storing as Prarabdhakarma, and their development to yield fruits as Bloom. Originally, even before the first Karmabhava could cause its effects, it was desire generated by sense perceptions that inspired actions. Casual sense perceptions continue to inspire actions that result in experiences of pleasures and pains. Thus has religion explained the source of all our experiences in life.

Is the bondage of Karmabhava eternal and insurmountable? Religion does not say so. It says that the Karmabhavas that have already commenced development towards bloom cannot be stopped or got rid off; but all others can be. The arousal of further Karmabhavas can be stopped by practicing religion. Religion directs all works to be earnestly dedicated to God. When every work is done in earnest dedication to God, no fresh Karmabhavas will arise to bind the Soul. The Karmabhavas that are in store (Samchitakarma) will perish on realization of God. Bhagavad Gita (4:37) says, "As the blazing fire reduces fuel to ashes, so does the blaze of God-realization (Jnana) reduce all Karmabhavas to ashes". (cf. also Adhyatma Upanishad 50, 53).

The waves of God realization will sweep the Subtle Body, and swallow all waves that subsist dormant in the Subtle Body, namely the Samchitakarma.

**Religion is not a mere belief; it is a way of life, it is a becoming of the Soul.** When a Soul realizes God to be all pervading – dwelling in all living beings – the thinking person begins to see all men and all beings as different manifestations of God, and all happenings as the playing of God. He sees God in all and in everything. Then he becomes the perfectly religious, saintly man – the spiritual man.

## Section 54 **THE SAINTLY MAN**

Bhagavad Gita (10:20) announces,
"God is Soul abiding in the hearts of all beings".
He who knows this truth about God, and follows it consistently in all his behaviors, is called a Saintly man. He sees God as the all pervading Being of Pure Consciousness (Chaitanyam), and venerates the Chaitanyam as a manifestation or existence of God wherever it is seen. Obviously every living being displays chaitanyam. So, the saintly man sees all living beings as manifestations or existence of God in different body forms. To him, God is the Impersonal Infinite Chaitanyam, and any Personal God and any living being is a manifestation or existence of God in a limited, definite form, male or female – a Personal God being a more conspicuous manifestation than other beings. So, Bhagavad Gita *6:29) mentions the external mark of a saintly man, the yogi or monk, thus:

"The Yogi sees God to dwell in all beings, and all beings in the God. He sees all equal (to self)." Illustratively it says,
"Enlightened men see alike a Brahmin of learning and culture, a cow, an elephant, a dog, and a savage". (ibid 5:18).

Evidently, he identifies every being as its Soul, and identifies the Soul as a fragment of God, dwelling in a body, and in that view, ignores the body as a mere covering of the Soul. (cf. Bhagavad Gita 2:22). He ignores even the Subtle Body as an inner covering of the Soul, and looks only to the precise Soul, the principle of vital Consciousness, as the being and an existence of the all pervading God, and therefore sees all equal to one another and to self.

When it is said that all men are equal and non-different, it does not mean that they are personally equal; they are **equals only in their spiritual aspect** – they are spiritually equals. Personal aspect here is the body (inclusive of the Subtle Body); spiritual aspect is the Inner Soul, the simple being of vital Consciousness. The Souls of all men are non-different, alike. Swami Vivekananda has explained this aspect very clearly with an illustration (vide his Complete Works, vol. 1 p. 379). A mass of clay may exist as a clay-elephant and a clay-mouse. The clay element and clay mouse are indeed different; they will ever be different from each other. But, put in water, they lose their shapes and differences, and show themselves to be identical clay. As clay they are one, they were one; but as elephant and mouse they were different. Clay was the same in both, but as diverse formations of clay they were different. Considered as multiple Souls diffused from God dwelling in different body forms, all persons are alike, but as diverse shapely beings, Jack, Joe and Jane, the persons are different from one another. The question is how we view the matter. If we look to the body forms or intellects or minds or outward features, men are different from one another. If we look to the spiritual essence of beings, the souls, men are only so many existences of the Impersonal God and therefore equals - all are then alike and equal. Saintly men look only to the God dwelling in

every being and overlook all other things about the being as mere shows of Nature. When God's presence is seen, everything else becomes insignificant in their view. They venerate – that is to say, they love and revere – every being as an existence of God. Tattvamasi (p. 23 above). That is the way the saintly men worship God, and that is said to be the highest form of Godworship.

Philokalia (vol. 1 p. 68) observes,
"Blessed is the monk who regards every man as God after God".
Mahanirvana Tantra (14:122) – English translation of the book by Sir John Woodroffe is named the Tantra of Great Liberation – describes veneration of God as present in every being to be the highest form of Godworship. It says,
"The highest is realization of Brahman in the beings; Meditation is the middling; Worship by recital of hymns is low; External worship is the lowest."
Four modes of Godworship are compared in this verse. The mode of lowest merit is the **External worship**. It is worship by outward physical acts, unaccompanied by internal or mental acts. It is mere ritualism. Decorating the image, offering flowers and sweet foods, waving of incense and lights, chanting hymns, with mind straying elsewhere, are external acts of worship. Visualization of God's presence on an image or other symbol, following the meaning of hymns being sung, making mental offerings, devotional surrender to the will of God, are internal acts of worship. Internal action that touches the Soul is the essence of a true worship. But, persons engaging a mercenary priest to conduct a ritual, and then conversing with friends on local politics while the priest goes on with the ritual, are not rare sights. How far is the participation of mind or Soul in such worships? A worship of the kind described in Bhagavad Gita 16:17 is not worth the name of worship. The conduct of a priest chanting hymns, with mind set on persons present or fees from them, is a mere external worship. A hasty worship done just to keep up the daily routine, before running to the business place, is another example of external worship. These are mere bodily acts, outward shows, not followed by mind or Soul. It is a worship by external organs, not by the internal self. The verse says that such external worships are of the lowest merit.

**Stotrapujas**, that is to say, worships by recital of hymns or recitation of names (like Sahasranamajapa), done with consciousness of their meaning, have a better tendency, than physical acts of external worship, to hold the mind in reverent remembrance of God. Songs have a particular capacity to excite an emotion, like devotion. Therefore this form of worship is considered superior to external worships. But, ordinarily, the intensity of thought on God in this form of worship does not rise to an acute concentration of mind as in a meditation, and therefore Mahanirvana Tantra ranks it below meditations.

**Meditation is concentration of thought on God.** To avoid distraction by sense perceptions, meditators generally prefer solitude or a closed room for their practices, and even there they close their eyes during meditation. Even then, the mind may play its fickleness and skip to other casual thoughts and desires. Bhagavad Gita (12:9) advises practice of Abhyasayoga to maintain mind steady on God. 'Abhyasa' means persistent practice. Whenever mind strays from remembrance of God, Intellect can call it back to think on God. A persistent practice of such recall whenever mind happens to stray, is the Abhyasayoga. By it, the mind's straying can be reduced progressively, and it can be trained to stay longer and longer in meditation on God. In a short period, mind will become steady, and meditation will become undisturbed. Continuous

remembrance of God is essential at worships, and that will normally be done in meditations on God. Bhagavad Gita (9:22) tells that undistracted meditation will bring God's unstinted grace on the meditator. Even so, meditation is not sufficient for attaining God, which is the highest goal of life in religion. Hence Mahanirvana Tantra ranks meditation only as a middling form of worship. In the normal householder's view, meditation may be the highest form of Godworship; but in the view of a monk or saintly man the highest form of worship is that which leads to attainment of God.

Finally, **the highest form of worship**: It is the way of saintly men to attain God. It is **the adoration of Brahman, the Impersonal God, in all living beings**. It finds God's presence as Souls in all beings (including self). (See p. 81-82 above). Bhagavad Gita exhorts,

"Know God as the Soul in all body forms". (ibid 13:3/2)

"God dwells in the heart centres of all beings". (ibid 18:61)

Bible also (1 Cor 3:19) exhorts,

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you."

Thus understanding all Souls to be existence of God, the saintly men venerate God directly in the beings, by loving and serving all beings as their spiritual siblings. Adoration of God will not be full and complete unless it is offered to Him wherever He is seen. No discrimination or exception is feasible in this regard. Yogasikha Upanishad (4:1) tells

"Because of the uniformity of Chaitanyam (Soul), discrimination (between beings) is never warranted."

God is one only, all pervading. Bhagavad Gita (13:28) observes God to be equally present in all beings. He is equally present in all men, noble and wretched. God is not to be slighted wherever He may be found, in whatever condition. So, the saintly man loves and reveres God, present in all men, noble or wretched. That is the **spiritual equality** that he scrupulously observes in all his behaviors. Tripadvibhuti Mahanarayana Upanishad (at the end of Chap. 6) tells

"You are Brahman; I am Brahman; Between us two, there exists no difference".

Brahman, or fragment of Brahman is the Soul in you and me – identical in both. The Subtle Body and the physical body are coverings to the Soul – they are different in each. The saintly man, who has renounced all worldliness, perceives only the Brahman in every man, and in every being. It is indeed a great thing to be saintly in this way. It is the summit of spiritual attainment.

Arjuna in Kurukshetra was not a saintly man, he was only a warrior prince thinking of slaughter in a war. (See Bhagavad Gita 1:34-37). Arjuna was called to fight to vindicate justice against his obstinately wicked cousins. Krishna abused imbecility and asked Arjuna to wage the war without thinking of results. He was to do it as a bidding of God. That was an extreme case. In normal cases, fight is condemned, and saintliness is thought and action is highly commended and praised by religion.

To see the soul in every man as an existence of God, is to assure brotherliness with all mankind. Differentiation even between opposites, like friend and foe, saint and sinner, is not warranted when the Souls are seen as existence of God in different roles of His mysterious play.

Bhagavad Gita (6:9) observes,
"Eminent is he who has equal regard for friend, a benefactor, an adversary, an indifferent person, an arbiter, an enemy, a kinsman, a pious man, and a sinner".
If a person realizes impartial spiritual equality in all men, and loves them all alike, irrespective of individual nature and disposition, that is regarded as the highest form of Godworship Bhagavad Gita (6:31) extols it, above a worship of God, it is 'living in God'. It says,
"Whoever worships God as the one Divinity dwelling in all beings, such yogi lives in God, whatever may be his way of life".
Christ said
"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me". (Mat 25:40)
In his sermon he said
"Love our enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you". (Mat. 5:44)
Not only did he preach so, but he observed it in his actions. When he was crucified, he prayed for the crucifiers:
"Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34)

When a person realizes the all pervadingness of God and consistently practices oneness of all beings in God, without exception, he is said to have attained the highest state of spiritual advancement, the Spiritual Enlightenment. In the language of Indian philosophy, he is said to have attained **Jivanmukti**, as a prelude to later attainment of **Videhamukti** when he leaves the body.

Bhagavad Gita (2:40) assures that even a little of the practice of religion or yoga, will lead to great results.

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